Tamil TIMES

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– Voltaire

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Peaceful protest against the recent bombing of the refugee camp at Durgadevi Temple at Tellipalai

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POLITICS OF THUGGERY AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Though the death and destruction resulting from the war in the North-East since June 1990 is continuing, the claim has been that the south of the island has become normal and peaceful and that the terror and counter-terror that characterised most parts of the south during 1988-1990 are a thing of the past never to be repeated. But the recent spate of incidents of politically motivated violence and thuggery leaves little room for placing much confidence in this claim.

The much respected Civil Rights Movement of Sri Lanka has recently highlighted thirty recent acts of political violence and thuggery, which it described as a 'new dimension of violence that is disfiguring society' and as representing a serious threat to peace and democracy in the country. The CRM identifies the perpetrators of this new wave of violence to include 'pro-government, anti-government elements as well as state agencies', and points out that 'the victims are persons whose politics or other activities or views are unpalatable to the perpetrators and that members of the media and allied occupations such as printers have in particular been targeted'.

The instances of the raid at the Navagama Press and its destruction while under police guard, attacks on opposition political meetings and demonstrations, violence against Provincial Councillors, intimidation within the precincts of the university, violence at the recent funerals at the Kanatte cemetery and a series of attacks on media personnel including outside the Fort railway station when reporters were subjected to physical violence and the threats against and the subsequent stabbing of a political cartoonist are some of the examples that the CRM has highlighted.

The government's rhetoric about its commitment to democracy and freedom of expression rings hollow in the context of what has been happening. The attackers of the political cartoonist, Yoonoos, threatened him that he would be killed if he continued to draw cartoons about the President. The correspondent of Asia week, John Colmey, was subjected to interrogation by the CID for having in possession 'illustrated material' about the President. Not long ago, Richard de Zoysa, was murdered while being engaged in producing a satirical play reportedly about the President. Though the recent attack at the Fort railway station on journalists covering the signature campaign by an opposition political party was witnessed and confirmed by independent foreign journalists, and the names and identity of the attackers had been given to the police, the Prime Minister in a statement published in the state-controlled newspapers claimed that what happened there was a clash between the party supporters and commuters – a statement which was palpably false.

The government's action in seeking to suppress the publication of the recent extraordinary revelations by one of the country's top police officers, former Deputy Inspector General of Police Premadasa Udugampola, instituting criminal prosecutions under the draconian emergency regulations against newspaper editors and publishers who had the courage to publish those disclosures and preventing a debate in parliament on the issue by the spurious use of the sub-judice rule reflected the reality of the extent to which freedom of expression and democratic politics by open debate have been undermined in Sri Lanka.

The opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party and its allies, when they were in power in the past, have also been guilty of suppression of free expression and muzzling the press. That their supporters recently targeted a pro-government journalist, Dayan Jayatilleke, for a violent and degrading attack at the Kanatte cemetery is indicative of the fact that much reliance cannot be placed on their protestations about freedom of expression.

The recent physical attacks upon journalists have produced an unaccustomed flurry of activity among a section of Sri Lankan journalists, whose conduct (with a few notable exceptions) has for too long been characterised by their cowardly servility, partisanship, self-censorship, sycophancy, and to sum it up a total lack of the ethics of journalism, a subject which certainly deserves separate treatment. Several organisations of journalists which have been lying dormant have become activated. A Free Media Movement has been formed and it has begun a campaign to divest state-control of the media. Over 500 journalists recently held a demonstration followed by a protest public meeting at which they claimed that 'the ruthless attacks on the press had prompted the journalists of the country to take to the streets and confront those who were manipulating the thugs to harass the press'. The Foreign Correspondents Association based in Colombo have extended their full cooperation and support to their local counterparts.

One can only express the hope that the campaign by the journalists and their associations will help to free the media from state-control, guarantee freedom of expression and produce a truly independent and impartial press in Sri Lanka. To achieve this, to begin with the journalists themselves must develop their own professional integrity, cease to be propagandists of one side or the other and follow the much wonted maxim 'Facts are sacred, Comment is free'.

Presidential Election Petition Dismissed

Premadasa Consolidates His Position

from Rita Sebastian in Colombo

The Supreme Court decision upholding the validity of President Ranasinghe Premadasa's election has consolidated his political position and restored legitimacy to his government.

Described as one of the longest trials in the island's legal history, the case in which Sri Lanka Freedom Party leader Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike challenged the validity of the election on the grounds of general intimidation and electoral malpractices, took over three and a half years.

The 5-bench court while conceding general intimidation due to the uprising by the left-wing Janatha Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) who had targeted both voters and candidates, however held that it did not necessarily indicate that the climate of general intimidation affected Premadasa's rivals more than it did him.

Since taking office in January 1989 President Premadasa has faced a number of moves to force him out of office. The biggest threat to his leadership came from within his own party, when United National Party dissidents, led by former Ministers Lalith Athulathmudali and Gamini Dissanayake, together with the country's political opposition, slapped an impeachment resolution against him in August 1991.

He survived that as well as the many no-confidence motions brought against his government. The Supreme court judgement he considers another victory, 'a confirmation of the mandate given to me by the people'.

The question that is being increasingly asked following the judgement is whether it would prod the President to taking some decisive steps with regard to the many political and economic problems he is faced with.

The priority issue still remains the resolving of the northeast conflict with bomb attacks, landmines and the on-off battles between the Tigers and government forces, taking its deadly toll of human life.

The government seems to have almost shelved its responsibility by leaving the deliberations to a Parliamentary Select Committee. The Parliamentary Select Committee however has not been able to make much headway on the unit of devolution, the most contentious issue on its agenda.

Confusing the issue further has been the inability of the Muslims and Tamil parties to work out some kind of formula for power-sharing in the northeast provinces. So many meetings and draft proposals after, they have not reached any meeting point.

Sri Lanka Muslim Congress President, A.M. Ashraff, who has indicated that he will release his newest proposals for the resolution of the conflict, at an international press conference has been meeting the hierarchy of the Buddhist clergy with a view to getting their approval for his solution to the northeast.

While the Tamil political groups are now openly talking of a federal arrangement for the northeast, Ashraff has cautioned against using the term 'federalism'.

'Federalism' in the minds of Sinhala people is something 'inimical and dangerous. It is not prudent to use the word federalism as it is imprudent to use the word Eelam and merger' says Ashraff.

And while the conflict continues President Premadasa totally committed to his political and administrative responsibilities travels extensively in the country supervising programmes.

Two programmes that he is concentrating on is creating enclaves of entrepreneurship in remote areas with the setting up of 200 textiles factories which will provide 100,000 jobs.

The second project deals with a major re-structuring of the administration, by decentralising political power to Divisional secretariats.

There is also considerable speculation that the President may reorganise and streamline his cabinet as he has shown dissatisfaction in some of his senior Ministers.

It is well known that some members of the Cabinet were sympathetic to the impeachment motion. So the President would think the time opportune to rid the cabinet of these elements. He has however very little talent to draw on, as he has very few skilled or experienced politicians left in the government with whom he can share responsibility.

But what seems uncertain at the moment is whether the country will slide into a period of protracted electoral politics until the next Presidential elections, leaving the military and political stalemate to continue as it is, or seek to resolving some of the outstanding issues.

Repatriation of Tamil Refugees from India Resumed

The repatriation of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees from India resumed on 31 August following the vacation on 27 August of an interim 'stay order' issued on 19 August by the Madras High Court to suspend the repatriation process for a week.

The 'stay order' was issued following petition filed by P. Nedumaran, President of the Tamilar Desiya Iyakkam (Tamil National Movement) and Dr. Ramadas, President of the Pattali Makkal Kadchi (Proletarian Peoples Party) alleging that the Tamil Nadu government was forcibly sending back the refugees to Sri Lanka despite their reluctance to return to their homes in the war-ravaged northern and eastern provinces.

The petitioners alleged that several refugees had complained that they were being forced to sign so-called 'voluntary consent statement', failing which they were being threatened that they would be put in special camps and implicated in criminal cases. They also argued that since peace did not prevail in Sri Lanka, this was not the proper time to repatriate the refugees as their lives might be in danger on their return.

The involvement of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in the supervision of the repatriation process was relied upon by the judge in vacating the 'stay order'. 'The UNHCR interviewed the refugees and when 42 of the 556 refugees said that they did not want to go back, they were sent back to the camps', Mr. P. Bhaskaradas, Secretary for Rehabilitation of the Tamil Nadu government claimed.

The judge in his order said: 'it is clear that the UNHCR representatives, whose impartiality cannot be questioned, were present to ascertain whether the refugees were going back to their country voluntarily. There was no material to show that the government had adopted intimidatory tactics. Sufficient material is not now available to show that the refugees

who had expressed unwillingness had been compelled to leave the country'.

It is reported that the UNHCR has drawn up a $6 million plan to resettle refugees on their return to Sri Lanka.

Of the 120,000 refugees who had come to India in the last three years, 115,000 were put up in 377 camps in Tamil Nadu. Of them, it was claimed that 30,000 expressed willingness to return when the Sri Lankan and Indian governments announced a rehabilitation package.

Between 20 January and 4 May this year, two ships undertook 27 voyages and between 29 April and 15 May, Indian airlines organised 35 flights to repatriate 23,000 refugees in all. As many as 8,904 refugees still remain to be repatriated among those who had signed up.

Many including the refugees themselves contest the official assertions that only those who volunteer were being returned. Recently 132 refugees, including 13 infants, were put on a special flight to Trincomalee in eastern Sri Lanka. At the Madras airport, before they boarded the plane, the refugees said that they did not wish to go back in view of the continuing violence in the island, but had been 'pressurised' by officials into returning.

The UNHCR official was not there at the airport to confirm or deny the claim by the refugees.

The refugees, mostly from the Mandapam camp near Rameshwaram alleged that the Special Deputy Collector in charge of their camp had brought pressure upon them. 'The Deputy Collector told us that our allowances would be stopped if we did not sign the consent forms, but we hear that in camps in Madurai and Trichy, the officers were kind and there have been no pressures to go', said Thiruchelvam, a young man from Vavuniya in the island.

Another refugee, who did not want to reveal his name said, 'Ninety percent of the people here do not wish to go. But the camp authorities had given them an ultimatum, giving them no choice in the matter'.

Mahendran from Trincomalee admitted that he had signed up for going, but did not want to leave now. 'I have received letters saying that conditions in the eastern province are bad. I wanted a postponement, but the camp authorities insisted that I must leave with this batch'.

According to a relief worker, thirty-nine families in Toppukollai camp in Pudukottai district wanted a few weeks' time to leave, but the authorities would not listen. 'There are so many things to be got when a family leaves a place for good – children's school certificates or arrears of wages. But they were given only 24 hours notice', he said.

'We can never turn to India for help again. But we are thankful to the people here for feeding us and putting us up for so long', was the parting remark of an old woman clutching her meagre belongings.

India has permitted the UNHCR officials to visit the refugee camps in Tamil Nadu and sample-check refugees to find out whether they are voluntarily returning.

Ascertaining the willingness of the refugees to return is one of five conditions on which the UNHCR has agreed to assist those returning. The other conditions include the provision of a list of repatriates and completed repatriation forms; giving the list of refugee camps in which the sample-checking is to be done; review of the cases of repatriates who want to postpone their departure or decide to stay in India; and permitting UNHCR to give the refugees details of the assistance the UNHCR is rendering to those returning to Sri Lanka.

India agreed to UNHCR inspection in view of the persistent criticism that Tamil Nadu officials were forcing the refugees to return to Sri Lanka.

NGOs Urge Cease-Fire and Peace Talks

Many Non-Governmental Organisations in a joint-statement submitted to the recently held session of the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights have called upon the international community to urge a cease-fire and negotiations between the warring parties, to fully comply with the norms of humanitarian law and to restore fully all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The text of the statement signed by over 20 NGOs, including the International Commission of Jurists, International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples, American Association of Jurists and Arab Lawyers Union, is as follows:

Our organizations have been extremely concerned about violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Sri Lanka both in the context of the Tamil people and their national struggle in the north and east and the oppression of political factions in the south. At present, we strongly condemn the economic blockade in place since July 1990 as well as on-going military attacks on refugee camps, residential areas and protected facilities such as places of worship, schools and hospitals. Disappearances in the south and east continue unabated, numbering more than 5,000 in the east since June 1990.

The Sub-Commission first adopted a resolution on Sri Lanka in 1984 following extensive testimony regarding communal violence against the Tamils. The Commission on Human Rights has also responded, most notably in its resolution 1987/61 in which it called upon the parties to the conflict to comply with humanitarian norms. The commission rapporteurs on torture and summary execution as well as the Working Group on Disappearances have also been compelled to address the grave situation in Sri Lanka annually for a number of years. In 1991 the Working Group visited Sri Lanka, and in UN Doc. E/CN 4/1992/18/ Add.1 reported truly alarming statistics on disappearances in all parts of the country.

As a result of this evidence, and also in response to compelling evidence of widespread humanitarian law violations, on 27 February 1992 the Commission read out a statement of 'serious concern'. The statement once again called upon all parties 'to respect fully the universally accepted rules of humanitarian law' and urged negotiations 'based on the principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms, leading to a durable peace in the north and east of the country.'

Regrettably, the Sri Lankan government has not seriously responded to the many proposals for cease-fire and peace talks, even when presented by other concerned governments. We are disappointed at the recent rejection by the Sri Lankan government of the Canadian Human Rights Mission, composed of Members of Parliament, religious leaders, a lawyer and a journalist as a mediating body. This was followed by a failure to respond to an offer by the government of Sweden to mediate.

The international community has appeared to respond to other situations, especially those in Europe, with a stronger resolve, presenting the impression of discrimination towards non-western peoples and cultures. We appeal to the international community to treat all these grave situations equally. Regarding Sri Lanka specifically, we ask the Sub-Commission (1) to urge a cease fire and negotiations between the warring parties within the context of the aspirations of the Tamil people; (2) to call on the parties to comply fully with humanitarian law norms; (3) to demand the lifting of the economic blockade of the north of the country; (4) to restore fully all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

'Ban Null & Void', says LTTE

Claiming that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was a 'combatant' in an armed conflict against the Sri Lankan government and such a status had been recognised in international law, the London-based International Secretariat of the LTTE from its headquarters at 54 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RG, in a statement dated 6 August submitted to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal in Delhi said that the declaration by the Indian authorities banning the LTTE under section 3 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967 was null, void and inoperative in law.

The statement added that the provisions of the 1967 Act are a clear violation of the fundamental right of freedom of expression secured by international law and enshrined in the Indian Constitution as well, hence are not only *ultra vires* the Indian Constitution but also offend the peremptory norms of international law. Therefore the purported ban on the LTTE was null and void.

The statement added that the LTTE was not an 'association' within the meaning of that expression in the 1967 Act, and in any event was not an association within the territorial jurisdiction of the government of India. The 'objective of the LTTE to secure the right of self determination of the people of Tamil Eelam, cannot be regarded in law as an unlawful activity within the meaning of that expression' in the 1967 Act. It also denied that the 'objective of the LTTE was to disrupt the sovereignty or territorial integrity of India' and that it 'had engaged in any activity whatsoever whether directly or indirectly to support that end'.

Petition Against Ban

In the meantime, Prof. Theeran, President of the Pattali Makkal Katchi (Proletarian Peoples Party), in his petition dated 8 August to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal, has objected to the banning notification declaring 'the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam including its members, activists, armed groups and sympathisers working on Indian soil' to be 'an unlawful association.'

Declaring that his party had been an active supporter of Tamil Eelam and also a sympathiser of the LTTE fighting for achieving Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka, Prof. Theeran added in his petition that the notification was aimed to suppress even expression of honest and sincere support to the groups fighting for their rights in Sri Lanka like the LTTE which clearly constituted unreasonable restriction and the exercise of fundamental rights by the citizens of India, and was clearly politically motivated.

Asserting that nobody in Tamil Nadu including his party advocated or worked for the division of India and that his party had full faith in the unity and integrity of India, and characterising the finding of the Indian government that the Tamil National Retrieval Army in collaboration with the LTTE and its leader Mr. Prabhakaran was working for the division of the country as 'a falsehood and fraud', Prof. Theeran has appealed to the Tribunal not to approve the banning notification, and in case it found substance to justify the action taken against the LTTE, at least to delete the words 'sympathisers working on Indian soil' as otherwise it would cause mischief to the exercise of fundamental rights guaranteed under the Indian Constitution.

CRM Lists 30 Cases of Political Thuggery

The new dimension of violence that is disfiguring the society is a most serious portent for the future of peace and democracy in Sri Lanka, says the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) in a statement issued on 28 August.

The statement recalls some 30 reports of violence in recent months. It points to the fact that violence takes place in the so-called 'peaceful' part of the country where there is no civil war or insurgency to serve as an 'excuse' or 'explanation'; that its perpetrators include pro-government and anti-government elements as well as state agencies; that the victims are persons whose politics or other activities or views are unpalatable to the perpetrators, and that members of the media and allied occupations such as printers have in particular been targeted.

Thuggery in politics is nothing new to Sri Lanka, says CRM, citing several of its earlier statements. All parties that have exercised governmental power since independence are in some measure to blame for the results of allowing their supporters to break the law with impunity. What is intolerable today is that we do not seem to have learned anything from the lessons of the past. 'Perhaps the most dangerous threat comes from the pervasive tendency to gloat when one's enemy is attacked, while being indignant when one's friends are at the receiving end. It is always easy to speak up for the human rights of those with whom one agrees. But the real test is whether we are prepared to stand up for the rights of those whom we differ from or even detest'.

The special responsibility of a government in power is to protect its moral right, as well as its practical ability, to demand respect for the law from all, including its political opponents, is stressed. This goes further than protecting people from physical violence and intimidation. The government must also take positive action to see that dissident views are given legitimate means of peaceful expression. Freedom of speech is not merely a right but also an important safety valve. An obvious step that must be taken is to open the radio and television to opposing views, and to make them a vehicle for reflecting public debate on political and other controversial matters.

The government needs to take clear, resolute and forceful steps to ensure that persons are able to speak and publish their views in however outspoken or displeasing a manner, and to otherwise participate in the democratic process, and that they are protected from violence when they do so. If the government convinces its opponents of its sincerity in so doing, and matches this with actual performance, there may be fresh hope for the survival of democracy in Sri Lanka, and a possibility of isolating any elements wedded to violence for ruthless and self-seeking ends, CRM states.

The instances referred to in the statement include the destruction of the Navagama Press while under police guard; attacks on the DUNF; violence against members of the Mt. Lavinia-Dehiwala Municipal Council and the North Central Province Council; intimidation at the university; intimidation of protesters at Kandalama; attacks on media personnel during the pada yatra, at the Attangalla meeting, at the Kalubowila hospital, and outside the Fort Railway Station; violence against ministers and others at the Kanatte Cemetery, violence at the Opposition's 'hartal' commemoration meeting; and the knifing of the 'Aththa' cartoonist.

The CRM also states, 'However infuriated some might feel at actions of the government, this is no excuse for physically attacking ministers or others at a funeral. There is no justification for setting upon Dayan Jayatilleke, any more than there can be any excuse for the assault and stabbing of Yoonoos for the avowed

purpose of deterring him from drawing political cartoons.

Nor is there any justification for indifference, or a 'serve them right' attitude, to violence against the DUNF (or, for that matter, any other party,) because its leaders in their time, while safe in the seats of power, participated in the denial of the human rights of others.

Displaced Muslims Want to Return to Their Homes in the North

Around 150,000 Muslims displaced from the North have in a memorandum addressed to President Ranasinghe Premadasa voiced their intention to go back to their homeland and live in peace and harmony with dignity enjoying the same freedom, rights and privileges guaranteed under the Constitution of Sri Lanka, which they enjoyed prior to October 30, 1990.

The memorandum has been sent to the President by the displaced North Muslims Rehabilitation Committee on behalf of the displaced Muslims from the North.

'Our committee further assures that it will extend its co-operation to President Premadasa and the government, all political parties, all religious groups and ethnic groups and all persons concerned in their endeavour to achieve our objective,' the memorandum stated.

It said that the younger generation of the displaced northern Muslims were becoming frustrated day by day. 'This may even lead to various anti-social activities in time to come unless immediate and correct measures were taken. The committee suggested that these youth should be involved in national youth services activities.'

The memorandum added:

'The displaced northern Muslims have not benefited under the government policy of recruitment under the ethnic ratio since 1990. Action should be taken immediately to rectify this grave injustice.

'The committee is made to understand that the displaced northern Muslims in order to seek appointments in the public service are required to produce their voters list to establish that they are residents in the said area for the past three years.

'The committee has received representations from six graduates among the displaced northern Muslims. According to one graduate, she was refused appointment in the public service as she could not produce the voter's list. The committee appeals to the relevant authorities to exempt the displaced northern Muslims from this requirement.

'It is suggested that displaced northern Muslims should be permitted to sit examinations for the purpose of obtaining employment in the public service in the areas in which they are now residing.

'The orphans from the displaced Muslims should be visited by the probation officers and absorbed into the President's foster parent scheme. Similarly, the physically handicapped should also be assisted by the State.

'The committee wishes to point out that most of the refugee camps lack water, toilet and other sanitary facilities. Therefore it is suggested that the services of the Common Amenities Board should be obtained. The Health Inspectors may be directed to visit camps on a regular basis.

'The committee notes that in the Puttalam district alone, more than 1,000 students are compelled to attend schools in the afternoons. Regrettably the duration of the session is only for 2½ hours. This is due to the lack of accommodation in the schools.

'The committee, therefore suggests, as a temporary measure, that government construct temporary class rooms. Funds for this purpose may be drawn from the de-centralized budget allocation of the Members of Parliament of the Northern Province. It should be noted that for the last two years, the displaced northern Muslims have not benefited from the said allocation. Recently a northern province MP allocated funds from his de-centralised budget allocation to a school in Matale district'.

'Failure to Recognise Language Rights Root Cause of Conflict'

President Ranasinghe Premadasa is aware that one of the root causes of minority discontent is that although Tamil is an official language, it has not been properly implemented by the bureaucrats, said Mr. Desmond Fernando P.C. Chairman of the Official Languages Commission recently.

The President is of the view that the minorities should have the right to transact all business with the government in Tamil which is a constitutional right and he has given priority to see that the minorities will be able to exercise this right, Mr. Fernando said.

Under the constitution all persons have a right to transact business with every single government institution in Sinhala, Tamil or English, one is entitled to a reply in the language the communication is addressed.

Any person is entitled to go to any government department or institution and transact business orally in Tamil or English. Further, any person in the southern part of the country, that is other than in the North and the East, is entitled to get a copy of any document in Tamil or English.

Likewise in the northern and eastern provinces the language of administration is Tamil but a Sinhala-speaking person has a right to get a reply in Sinhala to any letter he writes to the administration there.

Mr. Fernando said that the commission has selected Colombo for a survey to assess the degree to which the Colombo Municipality is complying with the official language provisions of the constitution. The survey commences on September 7, 1992.

'This was because Colombo is the capital of the country and it contains a large number of Tamil-speaking persons. And we want to make it easy, to ensure that Sinhala, Tamil and English speaking persons will all have the right to come to the municipality and transact business in all three languages', Mr. Fernando said.

He said the commission has many powers. 'We have the right to monitor the use of these three languages. We also have the power to punish any official who wilfully refuses to transact any business in any of the official languages'.

'For instance if you write a letter in Tamil and the head of that particular department wilfully refuses to answer the letter in Tamil we can take action to punish that person', he said.

The Official Languages Commission was set up in December, 1991 by the government to monitor the use of the official languages. It was set up under the Act of Parliament number 18 of 1991.

Among the steps the commission will take to monitor the implementation of the Act, will be to check every street name board in the city to ascertain that they are in all three languages. Likewise, every form used will be checked to see whether it is printed in all three languages.

Failure to ensure that the language rights of the minorities are recognised by bureaucrats is one of the major causes of the present ethnic crisis. The

Continued on page 9

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government is determined that the people should in practice as well as in law enjoy their constitutional rights to transact business with the government in all three languages.

A cross-section of ratepayers will also be interviewed to ascertain whether they are able to freely exercise their language rights, Mr. Fernando said.

Govt. Slashes Refugee Assistance UNHCR Expresses Concern

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees has expressed concern over reported lack of funds that has led to the Rehabilitation Ministry cutting down 50 per cent of the dry rations provided to Lankan refugees.

Peter Nicholas of the UNHCR in Colombo told the press that the cutback could affect the repatriation process which had been launched on the assurance of government's support to the refugees returning from India.

'The returnees depend on the dry ration and government support to restart life here. Once they realise that the support is diminishing they might have second thoughts on returning to Sri Lanka,' Dr. Nicholas warned. More than 22,000 refugees have returned to Sri Lanka from India during the past few months.

He said the UNHCR would have appreciated if the government had informed it about the reduction in advance, giving it time to adapt to the new situation.

UNHCR programmes, he said were normally arranged in advance, especially when they involve tragedy stricken areas.

Dr. Nicholas also pointed out that Trincomalee being one of the repatriation points had hardly any receptive capacity and was beset with many problems. The recent repatriation process in Trincomalee started in August this year. Dr. Nicholas claimed that the overcrowded Trincomalee refugee camps were in an appalling condition.

He said the UNHCR had negotiated with both the Sri Lankan and Indian governments to ferry future returnees to the Mannar Islands where overall conditions were better.

Meanwhile, the Rehabilitation Ministry has been plunged into a desperate situation as the government has allocated only Rs. 1 billion though Rs. 2.6 billion is needed for more than 500,000 refugees in camps.

They said the Treasury had been asked for more money and the full rations would be restored once this was provided.

UN Human Rights Team to Visit Sri Lanka in October

A delegation from the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances is expected to visit Sri Lanka early next month to take stock of the human rights situation in the island.

Human rights activist and SLFP Member of Parliament, Mahinda Rajapakse told the press that the three-member UN team is expected to arrive on October 5 and stay for about 10 days visiting various parts of the country and holding talks with government officials, human rights activists and lawyers.

The visit comes at a time when human rights groups monitoring human rights abuses in Sri Lanka have noted a marked improvement in the situation compared to the period two or three years ago.

Amnesty International, the international human rights organisation, recently noted in its latest annual report that the Government has taken several steps to 'improve' human rights protection in Sri Lanka.

These include the creation of a Presidential Commission of Inquiry into the Involuntary Removal of Persons to investigate 'disappearances' occurring between January 1991 and January 1992 and the setting up of a Human Rights Task Force to maintain a central register of all those held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and Emergency Regulations, and to monitor their fundamental rights.

But Amnesty International also said the security forces were still responsible for disappearances and extra-judicial executions and charged the LTTE with gross human rights abuses, including the torture and killing of prisoners.

Mr. Rajapakse said the UN human rights team expected next month might also try to visit Jaffna, this time to inquire into reports of human rights abuses there.

He said the UN team will be here also to monitor the Government's implementation of proposals to improve the human rights situation submitted by a similar delegation from the UN Working Group on Disappearances

The UN team is expected to inquire into continuing reports of disappearances, although on a lesser scale than before, he added.

Lalith Athulathmudal Fired Upon and Attacked

The leader of the Democratic United National Front (DUNF), Lalith Athulathmudali and his supporters were fired upon and attacked with iron bars and clubs on 29 August at Kawdana in Dehiwela, about 8 miles from the capital, Colombo.

The gang dressed in camouflage army uniforms fired twice at Athulathmudali. The shots narrowly missed him but one of his bodyguards was hit who suffered a fractured skull. The gang then attacked Mr. Athulathmudali and his supporters with iron rods and clubs. He suffered a leg injury while three of his bodyguards received head injuries requiring hospital treatment.

Athulathmudali's supporters retaliated resulting in injuries to one of the attackers, all of whom had fled the scene reportedly leaving the vehicle in which they had arrived.

Athulathmudali alleged that supporters of a ruling party politician from Dehiwela were responsible for the attack.

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Journalist Questioned on 'Illustrated Material' on President

American journalist John Colmey working for the 'Asia Week' magazine was questioned by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in connection with some 'illustrated material' found in his possession which, if published could have brought the government into disrepute and caused disaffection. This constituted an offence under the prevailing emergency regulations, Presidential Advisor on International Relations Bradman Weerakoon said on 6 August.

John Colmey has not been deported but had left the country on his own accord. The CID had questioned him on his involvement in the 'illustrated material' and after recording a statement he had been released, Mr. Weerakoon told journalists at the weekly news conference on 6 August at the Sri Jayewardenepura parliamentary complex.

Q: ***What is this 'illustrated material' you refer to? Was it a picture or a cartoon?***

A: It was not a picture: it was a drawing.

Q: ***You say it 'could have' brought the government into disrepute and caused disaffection? Was it positively determined that it would have done all this?***

A: This is as much as I know on this.

Q: ***Did you see it?***

A: Yes.

Q: ***How is it? Can you describe it?***

A: It is indescribable.

Q: ***Why, was it of a pornographic nature?***

A: Certainly not. It was of a political nature.

Q: ***Did it show somebody riding a Tiger?***

A: I can't remember exactly. But there was the face of a Tiger.

Q: ***Was it by a Sri Lankan cartoonist?***

A: I don't know.

Q: ***Did it show the President riding on the back of a Tiger?***

A: There was no such thing.

Q: ***Was the President depicted anywhere in that cartoon?***

A: Yes, but I don't know further details. John Colmey was questioned for the totality of that drawing.

Q: ***This journalist was from 'Asia Week'?***

A: He has some connection. You all probably know more about it.

Q: ***Is it the position that political cartoons depicting the President will not be allowed***

A: It is not that. This is something much more than a political cartoon. This is something which deemed a CID investigation. It would have if published brought the government into disrepute and caused disaffection. That is a violation of the emergency. Inquiries were held under that ambit. I see no reason why I should describe it.

Chandrika Attacks 'Hela Urumaya'

'The Hela Urumaya Group is trying to kindle the flames of communalism once again in the South. This is very dangerous', says Mrs. Chandrika Kumaratunga who has vehemently condemned this group now operating within the SLFP.

Mrs. Chandrika Kumaratunge observes that at a time when the minorities are regaining their lost confidence in the SLFP, the activities of the Hela Urumaya Group would tend to forestall this emerging trend.

According to her, the majority of SLFP will not bow down to the Hela Urumaya politics. She observes that the SLFP has not accepted the politics of this group.

Mrs. Kumaratunge now considered as the SLFP political theoretician, is spelling out the party stand on several vital current issues.

In a scathing attack on the Hela Urumaya Group, she has stated that the whole world is awaiting the SLFP's solution to the North East problem. In this context she wondered whether the Hela Urumaya Group is deliberately trying to sabotage the growing confidence of the minorities in the SLFP.

Regarding the North East question, Mrs. Kumaratunga says that areas in the East inhabited by Tamil people should be merged with the North.

'There should be a separate administration for the Sinhala areas in the East. Similarly the suggestion that a separate administration for the Muslims in Tamil areas deserves consideration. Many of my proposals in this regard were embodied in the DPA manifesto presented for the 1988 Presidential elections', she says.

Mrs. Kumaratunga observes that although the SLFP differed with policies of the DPA, she finds that Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike and several other leaders are now of the opinion that these proposals aiming at solving the Tamil problem should be accepted.

She has observed: 'I believe that the Tamil people too have the right to live as citizens of this country enjoying all rights now enjoyed by the Sinhalese as their equals. It is the duty of the Sinhala majority to agree to the granting of those rights.'

She has further stated: 'In view of the treatment meted out to the Tamils in the past specially by the UNP governments, it is difficult to believe that the Tamil people of the North-East would place any confidence in a government of a Sinhala party.

She has therefore advocated a system of devolution of power in the North and East by granting additional powers to Provincial Councils.

Cartoonist Stabbed

Jiffry Yoonoos, aged 60, a veteran political cartoonist working with the left-wing Sinhala daily 'Aththa' was attacked and knifed by 'thugs' near h. residence in Colombo on the evening 18 August. He sustained stab injurie to his face.

The attack followed just a day after gunmen forcibly entered his home and threatened him with death the previous day. On the night of 17 August an unidentified armed gang storme Yoonoos's residence in Borella. smashed a three-wheeler belong to his wife, and one of the gang shoved pistol in the cartoonist's mouth whil another thrust a knife into his ribs and threatened him to stop drawing cartoons about the President or get killed.

The stabbling attack occurred after Yoonoos had complained about the previous day's incident in a letter to the Inspector general of Police stating that he had identified a certain 'notorious criminal' as the leader of the gang which attacked him. He had provided the IGP with the 'nickname' of the gang leader.

In his letter to the IGP, Yoonoos stated: 'At about 9.15 on the night of August 17, 1992, while my wife and I were watching television, I heard the sound of a car screeching to a halt

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'We Were Right in Talking to the Tigers', – Hameed

by T. Sabaratnam

Justice and Higher Education Minister, Shahul Hameed, who talked to the Tigers for 14 months, said he was becoming more and more convinced that what they did was the correct thing.

Inaugurating the full day seminar 'Federalism, devolution and provincial councils: a reappraisal', organised by the council for Liberal Democracy, Minister Hameed said: 'In those 14 months we tried to make the LTTE accept the Provincial Council system and work within it. In those 14 months we started confidence-building and tried to gradually move forward from there'.

'When I think of it now, I become more and more convinced that what we did was correct, the approach we adopted was the best', the minister said.

He said the crisis Shri Lanka is facing is nothing peculiar. Similar crises are experienced in many parts of the world. They are mainly the result of the neglect of concerns of minority communities. The League of Nations founded after the first world war was sensitive to the interests of the minority communities.

After the war, the emphasis shifted to human rights and nation states were equated to national majorities. This resulted in the 'nationalisation' of cultural minorities. That occurred almost in parallel to the nationalisation of the economy.

He regretted that while the World Bank was stressing on de-nationalisation of the economy, the United Nations had failed to talk about the denationalisation of the national minorities.

All minority groups want to retain their identities, their roots.

Shri Lanka went through this global process since independence. In 1956, the Sinhala Only Act was enacted. In 1971 the second chamber was abolished. The 1972 Republican Constitution placed Sinhala Only on a pedestal. It removed Section 29 of the Soulbury Constitution which the minorities regarded as a safeguard.

The 1978 constitution did away with single and multi-member constituencies and introduced the proportional representation system. Subsequently preferential voting was introduced. All these measures eroded the confidence the minorities had in the national majority community, Mr. Hameed said.

He said since 1978 some positive measures were taken to reverse this trend. Fundamental rights were made justiciable, the Stateless were given citizenship. Tamil was made an official language.

He singled out the enactment of the sixth amendment to the constitution passed a few days after the 1983 riots as the step which damaged ethnic relations most.

'I opposed it. I opposed it for very good reasons. As a foreign minister I looked at its reality, results and reaction. I told the cabinet that amendment would drive away the Tamil MPs from parliament. I told them the Tamil MPs should be there for the government to talk to.

'If they are driven away you may have to talk with them through others. My warnings were not heeded. We talked to the Tamil MPs through others', he said.

Minister Hameed who played an important role in all the All-Party Conferences (APCs) then related another mistake the then government made in 1984. The APC was held for six months and substantial agreement was reached in most matters.

The TULF accepted the flag and the national anthem. The creation of separate regional councils for the northern and eastern provinces and the setting up of a co-ordinating council was discussed.

'We were at the point of clinching the deal but the opportunity was missed. That was tragic. It had tragic consequences for Shri Lanka'.

Again, Mr. Hameed said, during the Bangalore SAARC summit in November 1984 a rare chance was missed. In the adjoining room were MGR and Prabhakaran. But no meeting took place.

He defended the talks with the LTTE. That was an effort to bring them back to the democratic mainstream.

Mistakes have been made. Chances had been missed. But the question now is to find a solution. A solution is a must for without a solution the future will be bleak.

There are three possible solutions that come to his mind, he said. One is federalism. For that the constitution has to be amended. A two-third majority and an approval in a referendum is needed for that.

The second is to do away with the three lists – the subjects and powers allocated to the centre, provincial councils and the concurrent list – and to adopt a list of the subjects allocated to the provinces. To do this, some say the constitution should be amended by a two-third majority. Some say a two-third majority and a referendum are necessary.

The third alternative is to devolve most of the executive powers to the provinces. Then the executive at the centre will become ceremonial.

Mr. Hameed said whatever the solution, the support of the people is needed. A consensus of the people should be evolved.

'Creation of such consensus is the responsibility of all political parties and men of goodwill. People want a solution. They want an end to bloodshed', Minister Hameed said.

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opposite my house at No.18A National Housing Scheme, Colombo 8. Suddenly the gates were flung open and about 20 thugs, led by a notorious lumpen and criminal, rushed into my front verandah shouting raw obscenities in Sinhala'.

Four journalists' organisations, the Free Media Movement, Sri Lanka Working Journalists Association, Sri Lanka Foreign Correspondents Association and the Union of Journalists of Sri Lanka have protested to the government against the attack on Yoonoos pointing out that the attack on him was one of a series of attacks on local and foreign journalists in the past month.

Premadasa Accused

Accusing President Premadasa's government of being the only government in the history of the world to have supplied weapons to an organisation that was engaged in a war against the State, Anura Bandaranaike, SLFP MP revealed in parliament recently that during the time the IPKF was fighting the LTTE, the government gave the Tigers a large quantity of weapons including 5,000 Chinese made T-56 rifles, twenty thousand rounds of ammunition, walkie-talkies, jungle boots, ventilators to be used in underground bunkers etc. On the instructions of President Premadasa these weapons were taken to Mullaitivu and delivered at Vettilaikerni to the LTTE by an army officer holding the rank of Lieutenant whose sworn testimony in the form of an affidavit was in his possession, he added. In response, cabinet minister Ranil Wickremasinghe said that it was for the purpose of defeating the Tamil National Army that the government assisted and sought the support of the LTTE.

TULF Calls for Federal Solution

by Roshan Peiris

Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) leader, M. Sivasithamparam, breaking a long silence has appealed to all Tamil groups and parties to co-operate and work for a political solution to the ethnic crisis, preferably on federal lines.

In an interview Mr. Sivasithamparam answered questions on what he described as the 'sad and tragic' ethnic conflict.

'I lost my house, my law books, my car – they were all burnt in 1983, so I have no place to live, except here – the TULF office. I sometimes cry when I think of the ethnic crisis here. It is very sad, and very tragic for all. So very many lives are lost – Tamil, Sinhala and Muslim. There is extensive damage to property, a complete breakdown of economic activity in the North and East and a total absence of law and order,' Mr. Sivasithamparam said.

Excerpts from the interview:

Question: Is federalism a possible solution to the ethnic crisis?

Answer: I think the only solution to the ethnic problem is a solution based on federal principles.

Q: Does it mean you are giving up the Eelam demand?

A: The TULF support federalism as a compromise to preserve the unity of the country.

Q: Would you agree that Provincial Councils are a beginning?

A: One must not mistake decentralisation for devolution. That is the mistake that has been made. To us, they are two different things.

Once power in certain subjects is devolved in the federal unit, then the Centre should not interfere in the legislative and executive functions of the peripheral unit, except in the case of external aggression or civil war.

The Centre can control foreign affairs, communications, currency etc.

Q: In the federal system of India, the Centre has dismissed state governments. How does this fit in with your views?

A: I believe that the Centre should not have the power to dissolve the peripheral unit, unless there is complete mismanagement of finance.

Even if this happens, the Centre must simultaneously set a date for new elections. It could be done only for a short interim period in exceptional circumstances.

Q: The two major national parties, the UNP and the SLFP, have not yet submitted their proposals to the Select Committee on the ethnic crisis. They have also both stated they are against the merger of the North and East. What is your view?

A: I am thoroughly disappointed that the two main parties are fighting shy of placing their proposals before the Select Committee. Each one is trying to play hide and seek with the other, instead of agreeing to a solution that would work.

As for the merger of the North and East, the merger is the basis and sheet anchor of our policy. On that all Tamil political groups are agreed.

Q: You need to also appreciate the position of the other parties, what about the reaction of the Sinhala people to a merger?

A: I believe the Sinhala political leadership must agree to a merger. I don't think the Sinhala people will create difficulties. We are confident that the Sinhala people could be convinced that a merger is a solution to this 'running sore'.

After all, the government has gone ahead with the privatisation of public enterprises and of estates despite protests. The government must go ahead and accept the merger as a fait accompli.

Q: There is fear among the Sinhala people that the merger would lead to the formation of a Tamil kingdom together with the Indian Tamils in the estate areas. Don't you think this is a legitimate fear?

A: The Tamil people do not seek to set up a kingdom with the estate Indian Tamils, though doubtless there are common cultural bonds.

Earlier, the Sinhala people expressed fear of the Tamils in the North and East allying with South India. That too has proved a baseless fear, so is this one.

Q: Do you think you can carry all the Tamil political parties with you, in proposing federalism?

A: There are differences of approaches between the TULF and some of the other Tamil groups. But we have worked together in the past and are prepared to work together now to find a political solution on federal lines.

A military solution will never last – genocide will be the only result.

The Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact of 1957 had the necessary political ingredients for a federal solution. I hope it can be revived as a basis for federalism.

(*The Sunday Times*, 6.9.92).

Editor Urges Sinhalese & Tamils to Break Out of 'Extremist Traps'

Amirthalingam Memorial Lecture

A senior Indian journalist who played a significant role in formulating the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987 appealed to both Sinhalese and Tamils to break away from the Sinhala Only and Eelam traps and find a solution to the ethnic problem based on the federal features already in place.

Delivering the Amirthalingam Memorial Lecture at the BMICH in Colombo on 31 August, *Frontline* magazine editor N. Ram urged the moderates of both communities to come to the fore and work out a solution. Veteran Tamil politician and General Secretary of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), A. Amirthalingam was assassinated by LTTE gunmen in July 1989.

Mr. Ram told the TULF to drop the Eelam demand as it has created misunderstanding among the majority Sinhala people and to present the Tamil question as a democratic demand based on human rights, justice and fairplay.

He also asked the TULF to drop the twin demands of right of self-determination and Tamil homeland as they only bred suspicion in the minds of the Sinhala people.

He urged the Sinhala moderates to agree to build on the two documents: Bandaranaike–Chelvanayakam Pact and the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987.

'I believe it is time Shri Lanka breaks out of the Sinhala Only and

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In Memory of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord

by Dr. Jayadeva Uyangoda,
Senior Lecturer in Political Science, University of Colombo

July 29 marked the fifth anniversary of signing the Indo-Lanka Accord Peace Accord in Colombo. Even before it marked the fifth year, the Accord had relegated itself to the realm of remembering the things past. For some, the Accord is dead and buried; for some others, it is still alive and around us. Such competing claims notwithstanding, Sri Lankans will continue to find themselves, at least for the foreseeable future, living under the colossal shadow of the Accord.

Emergence of JVP

In Sri Lanka, the Accord brought to the surface considerable dissension within the ruling UNP. It was also seized by the underground JVP as a new springboard to emerge as a formidable counter-state force. The Provincial Councils and the IPKF were turned into major anti-UNP propaganda planks by the SLFP and other Sinhalese opposition parties too. For all the Sinhalese nationalist forces, both in and outside the government, signing the Accord by Jayewardene was nothing short of a betrayal of unpardonable magnitude.

When President Junius Jayewardene decided in mid-1988 to hand over the reigns of the UNP to the then Prime Minister Premadasa, who had opposed the Accord, the political fate of the July '87 initiative also took an unmistakeably new turn. If Jayewardene outsmarted Gandhi by handing over the responsibility of North-East war to India, President Premadasa, in his first six months in office, thwarted any further Indian assertion in Sri Lanka's ethnic politics. Indeed, Premadasa's peace initiative with the LTTE in April 1989 was a major signal that New Delhi had absolutely no political role in Sri Lanka, as envisaged and conceptualized in the Accord.

This is not to say that President Premadasa was single-mindedly determined to invalidate the Accord. Even if he wanted to let the Accord be in force, he could not have kept it alive. The point is that the very circumstances under which the Accord was signed had made it imperative that its implementation required the presence in power of both Jayewardene and Gandhi. However, the Accord was signed during the last year of Jayewardene's constitutionally mandated second term.

Moreover, Jayewardene signed this most controversial document without canvassing any support for his move even within his own party, let alone in the country at large. Even with a non-supporter in office in Colombo, India's only guarantee for the Accord to be operative was to continue to station its troops, euphemistically called Peace Keeping Force, in Sri Lanka's territory.

But, the Premadasa administration, the SLFP, the JVP and the LTTE in short all major political actors in Sri Lanka – were unanimous on the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the IPKF. When the last IPKF soldier boarded the ship at Trincomalee harbour in March 1990, New Delhi's direct role – military as well as mediatory – in the North-East conflict came to an effective end.

Provincial Councils

However, the Accord is not yet a mere archival document. With all the chaos to which it led both India and Sri Lanka, with all the hatred and denunciation it attracted, the Accord enabled the Sri Lankan Tamil community to secure one significant gain – Provincial Councils.

The 13th Amendment would never have been made possible, had it not been for the Jayewardene-Gandhi adventure of July, 1987. The 13th Amendment, by the way, is the most, if not only, progressive and democratic piece of constitutional legislation that Sri Lankan parliament has passed since independence. It offered the Tamils a workable, albeit with some limitations, Constitutional basis for autonomy. It also envisaged a radical re-structuring of the postcolonial state in Sri Lanka in the direction of devolutionary democracy.

Herein lies the political failure of the Accord as well. The Accord, due to a variety of reasons, signified a sudden willingness on the part of some ruling sections of both India and Sri Lanka to jointly try out a political solution.

For Rajiv Gandhi, Jayewardene's change of mind perhaps meant a rare and surprising moment of accommodation which could also secure a continuous diplomatic and military role for India in the affairs of Sri Lanka. For Jayewardene, as he later admitted, it was a Napoleonesque moment; a strategic opportunity that would not come by every day. Hence the haste and optimism of both Jayewardene and Gandhi.

Yet, the crux of the matter is that neither the Sinhalese society nor the Tamil society knew exactly what a 'political solution' would have entailed.

For the LTTE, the package offered in the Accord to Tamils was too little, too late. For Sinhalese nationalists forces it was too much and too early. For the EPRLF, which accepted the Accord and went along with it, it was a political experiment to be constantly supported and ensured by India. Many other Tamil militant groups decided to watch the events, while taking a rest in Colombo. And finally, for the Premadasa administration, survival amidst a Southern rebellion was too urgent a matter to be disregarded.

The Southern opposition to the Accord in a way changed the Southern politics too. Resistance emerged from a range of sources; the underground JVP organized and led violent protests with the active support of many other Sinhalese nationalist parties. The entire South swiftly became a battle ground in which contending claims of patriotic allegiance to the 'Motherland' were tested, with increasing ferocity, till the end of 1989. Indeed, the entire spectrum of the Sinhalese opposition political parties, except those of the Left, swiftly and willingly capitulated before the JVP's anti-Indian mobilization.

The JVP's demise in the latter part of 1989 marked the end of militant Southern opposition to the Accord. Yet, the Accord and its consequences continued to dominate the political debate in Sri Lanka.

The Provincial Councils and devolution, which were written into the Constitution of the Republic and constituted a central theme in the political debate, are direct political creations of the Accord. Still lacking in much political support and even legitimacy, devolution, nevertheless, is a real fact of post-'87 Sri Lankan politics.

Tamil response

One may hate and forget the Accord as a bad dream; yet one can only be foolish by being oblivious to the 13th Amendment which has set parameters of the political debate concerning Sri Lanka's ethnic relations, today and tomorrow.

Looking back at the Sri Lankan Tamil response to the Accord and the political ambience which surrounded it, we are confronted with a seemingly inexplicable question: What made

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Prabhakaran and the LTTE reject the political package offered through the Accord?

Many reasons have been adduced by commentators for the LTTE's enigmatic behaviour. A somewhat consensus view is that a primarily military and militaristic organization, which had consistently lacked a clear political character, acted the way it did. Political and military blunders made in Colombo and Delhi enabled the LTTE leadership to justify its own political delinquency. And all this in turn compelled the Sri Lankan Tamil people to bear yet another era of senseless war.

The LTTE-IPKF confrontation was immensely destructive as far as the civilian populace was concerned. So has been the second phase of the war with the Sri Lankan state since July 1990. In the course of the post-Accord war, Tamil nationalism too came to be hegemonized by a phenomenon called 'Tigerism' an intransigent militarism which, though couched in the rhetoric of the nation, is fascistic in essence.

It may not be as a direct result of the Accord that fascistic nationalisms appeared simultaneously in Sinhala and Tamil societies. Rather, the Accord was the catalyst for the crystallization of these forces. While the LTTE largely succeeded in annihilating, or rendering ineffective, all its rivals in the Tamil political spectrum, the JVP, ironically, paid the heaviest price for its own sudden spurt generated by the post-Accord crisis.

At a crucial moment of the JVP's ascendancy, President Premadasa stripped the JVP of its own claim to anti-Indian patriotism by leading a concerted anti-IPKF propaganda drive.

When Premadasa effectively broke the JVP's monopoly of anti-Indian discourse in mid-1989, the job of dealing with the JVP was a mere military task. Thus, the story of the rise and fall of the second JVP insurrection is closely interwoven with the zig-zag course of post-Accord politics.

Intractable question

The story, however, of the LTTE and the Tamil ethnic question has not ended in the same fashion. Again and again, events have proved that it is the most intractable question in twentieth century Sri Lankan politics.

Developments since July 1987 have not made the task of ethnic accommodation less insurmountable. India's role as a mediator has now effectively ended and for the utter jubilation of chauvinistic forces in the South, there

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LIBERATION, ONLY SOLUTION TO OPPRESSION

A New Leadership Needed

by C. Ramilla

There was a time, not so long ago, when any conversation between any two Tamil people, almost anywhere in the world, would have been dominated by issues related to the struggle to liberate Eelam. That this is no longer the case is a matter for serious concern.

It is not because any of the objective factors have changed. There is still a war being waged. The Sri Lankan army is still as brutal. The Sri Lankan government is still as bullish. The Sinhala people are still as chauvinistic. The Tamil people in Eelam are still as oppressed. The lack of any alternative, other than national liberation is still as stark.

But, somehow, for Tamils abroad at least, a sense of apathy has set in. To dismiss this as an irrelevant factor, merely indicative of a fickle nature, would be to miss the significance of important signs.

Tamil people abroad were anything but apathetic in recent times, as witnessed by the funds raised, the large numbers willing to march on the streets, and the high international profile and level of support won through various campaigning and lobbying activities. The fact that all this is now almost past history, while still our people in Eelam are struggling, is a sign that something has gone badly wrong somewhere.

For Tamil people in Eelam, apathy is a luxury they cannot afford. For them the suffocating oppression of the Sinhala state and the brutal repression of the Sinhala army is a reality on their door step, that is known only too well. They grant their support to anyone protecting them from the horrors of the Sinhala state. Even among them, however, that spark and sizzling enthusiasm for struggle and change, that was once common among ordinary people, seems somehow to have faded away.

This sense of alienation from the struggle among ordinary people at home and abroad, even while recognising that the only path to our salvation lies in our national liberation, raises the question of why this has come about.

Support Based on Expediency

Clearly the answer lies with the group that has taken on the leadership of the Tamil national liberation struggle, the LTTE. It is the role of leaders to provide leadership. The leadership provided by the LTTE, while being militarily very effective, has been politically and in social terms disastrous. There is nothing less counter productive than alienating a people when you are conducting a peoples' struggle.

Tamil people of Eelam, of course, will continue to grant support to the LTTE as long as there is external terror from which the LTTE are the only form of defence. This, however, is support based on expediency. It is not the form of support that is necessary for winning and defending victory. For that the full nation has to be harnessed. The LTTE has miserably failed in this task, if indeed it thought it necessary to do this in the first place.

As a force for social transformation, for freedom, democracy and equality, the LTTE has shown itself to be utterly bankrupt. It is this bankruptcy and inability to bring about social transformation even in areas that have effectively been liberated, that has killed the sparkle and sizzling enthusiasm among ordinary people.

Promise of change has not materialised. Lofty hopes have been dashed. It is this that is at the root cause of peoples' apathy and alienation. Replacing one form of oppression, with another is nobody's idea of winning freedom. The noble ideals of liberty, democracy and equality need to be translated into concrete actions in order to inspire people into involvement and commitment.

The LTTE's largest recruiting ground now is the under ten age group. This raises many questions of morals and ethics. Is it right to place arms and live ammunitions in the hands of young children? Is it correct to mobilise for active combat immature little children who are too young to make informed decisions and too small to shoulder the full burdens of adult responsibility? What are we as a people, if we can take cover in safety while allowing the most vulnerable and dependent among us to be used as cannon fodder on our behalf?

Use of Children

These are questions that none of us can escape whether living at home or abroad. But the reason for these questions being raised in the first place, is due to the fact that the LTTE has to

resort to using children precisely because it has failed to harness the full and active participation of the adult population.

The LTTE has more than simply failed to realise the ideals of freedom and democracy within the nation, necessary to really mobilise people on a mass scale. It in fact actively pursues a policy that inspires, even within Tamil people, fear, rather than the will to freedom; imposes the rule of the gun over democratic principles; and thwarts equality within the nation, between Tamil Muslims, Christians and Hindus, Tamil women and men and between Tamil oppressed and privileged castes and classes.

This is not merely being bankrupt as a force for social change. It is in fact the case that the very essence of LTTE as an organisation has consistently been and continued to be antithetical to the principles of freedom, democracy and equality as expressed within the Tamil nation.

While the LTTE represents a formidable threat to democratic, civil society within Eelam, it is undeniably the case that they are spearheading the war for national liberation from Sinhala state oppression that poses an even greater threat to Tamil people.

This position of the LTTE, of defending Eelam from Sinhala state oppression while at the same time posing a formidable threat in itself to democratic civil society within Eelam, is a position that leads to considerable difficulty for many people in terms of engaging with the struggle. Attacking the LTTE while defending the legitimacy of the need for national liberation has been a position that has been politically difficult to negotiate.

This has not been helped by the fact that traitors to the Eelam cause have used the exposure of the LTTE as a means of denying the legitimacy of the entire Tamil struggle for national liberation. Thereby they have attempted to sabotage the whole struggle. But to do this is to fail to make the distinction between a struggle and its leadership.

Apathy and Alienation

Our struggle for national liberation is the only solution to our national oppression. Who leads it, however, is for Tamil people to decide and is in itself a battle ground. And it is a decision that has to be weighed and made on a continuous basis, in keeping with the essence of democracy in practice.

While apathy, disillusionment and alienation are growing among Tamil people, on the one hand, yet the solution to this problem is also growing.

The solution is represented by the growing number and stridency of those who are willing and able to handle the threats posed by both the LTTE and the Sinhala state. Those who are able to restate the meaning of liberation in its full sense, to rescue it from the purely military agenda and to replace it firmly back on the political agenda where it belongs.

What we as a people need now are leaders who are as dedicated to ending Sinhala oppression as they are committed to the creation of a society in Eelam based on principles of individual freedom, collective responsibility and equality between citizens. This is the only kind of society that can use the full potential of its most important resource, its people, to build a strong, free and prosperous nation that cannot be defeated.

In order to bring about this leadership it is the responsibility of every Tamil person to take on the laborious task of sowing the seeds of freedom, democracy and equality in every sphere of life, before the ground is made barren by forces of thuggery on both sides of our national frontiers.

The Price of Failure

When these ideals are internalised and reflected in the everyday actions of ordinary Tamil men, women and children throughout our dispersed nation, it is then that victory will be in sight. For a nation of people so mobilised will be undefeatable. And the possibilities for creating the conditions to allow the full potential of our people and our nation to prosper will be limitless.

The price of failure is high. It is being condemned to live through the tormented destruction of our nation. It is condemning our future generations to live in a state of slavery. Physically enslaved in what will become our former homelands, or emotionally and psychologically enslaved by whatever oppressive and racist culture they find themselves in, throughout the dispersed diaspora.

Clearly a new leadership is needed to take our struggle to victory. The LTTE cannot deliver freedom, however effective they are militarily. It needs to be able to do more than serve up the heads of a couple of generals every now and then, stupendous though this achievement is, in order to establish freedom for Tamil people.

Our leaders are what we produce. In order to produce a leadership that will liberate our nation and ourselves from every form of oppression, we need to take collective responsibility for creating a society that will settle for nothing less than full freedom and dignity for all our people.

All power to our future leaders who will be able to guide our nation to victory under the truly liberating banner of freedom, democracy and equality.

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Eelam traps. The Tamils should evaluate whether the Eelam demand had helped them to achieve their objectives and the Sinhalese should consider whether their policy of denying the just demands of the Tamils helped them', he said.

Mr. Ram who called the LTTE Pol Pottist said the Lankan security forces are on top now. With better fire-power, planning, training and manpower, the Lankan forces would be able to pin down the Tigers in a conventional war, he said. But the LTTE would revert to guerrilla warfare where it would resort to hit-and-run tactics. It would ambush the troops and set off landmines.

'It's an unwinnable war', he said and added that reality should be accepted, taken into account.

He advocated a political solution built on the federal features already accepted and administered.

'The idea of a multi-ethnic state, the idea of pluralism, of devolution of power and of the temporary merger of the northern and eastern provinces have all been accepted. The citizenship issue, official status for the Tamil language and the question of land have all been settled. You can build upon these', he said.

Mr. Ram said the word federalism had been much abused in Shri Lanka. It had been thought of as a means to separation. Even in India the word federalism is not much liked or used. The word federalism is not in the Indian constitution.

'What is there in a word. What is important is reality. If you can make use of federal features without using the word federalism, use it', he said.

In India federalism had worked. In eastern India federal features had been enshrined to find a solution to the Mizoram and Assam insurgencies. He said Shri Lanka should learn from these Indian experiences.

Mr. Ram described the Indo-Lanka Accord as a failure and blamed the LTTE for not permitting it to work. He also condemned the Indian dual policy of supporting Shri Lanka's sovereign-

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'Eelam is a Pipe-Dream but a Response to Sinhala-Buddhist Chauvinism'

N. Ram, Editor of *Frontline* and of *The Hindu* in a recent interview with Lakshman Gunasekera

N. Ram, Editor, *Frontline.*

Q: ***You are best known here, in Sri Lanka, as an Indian journalist who has been involved in the political dialogue between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil secessionist groups. How do you reconcile this kind of involvement with your professional standing as an 'uninvolved' communicator; as a supposedly 'objective' reporter? Would you recommend such 'involved journalism'?***

A: I always perceived myself as a journalist and, whatever position I took on this issue came as a by-product of my journalistic interest in, and coverage of, the ethnic conflict. So in that sense, when you are concerned with political or humanitarian issues, in this case, very human problems, it is very hard to say that I am absolutely neutral on it. To get 'involved' is, no doubt, an unconventional role for journalists. But you have to make your choice. I wouldn't recommend it as an ideal. But there are such situations; It happened in Vietnam, in China, with various journalists. When there is a major transformation or crisis in society people would take a stand. My opinion was sought. And I really wished the process well. I gave whatever I could contribute positively. That's a personal, moral choice. I think in a violent conflict very few of us would be neutral.

Q: ***You wanted to end the violence?***

A: In whatever little way one could contribute.

Q: ***What has been your role in the politics of Sri Lankan Tamil secessionism and the attempts to resolve the ethnic conflict?***

A: I was never happy with the politics of Sri Lankan Tamil secessionism. On the one hand you had sympathy for the Tamils who were struggling for justice. We saw them as victims of this conflict who were being denied their right to equality; were denied fairplay. On the other hand, (and this was part of the overall Indian response) people were never really happy with the Eelam demand. But at that time the emphasis was on solidarity and sympathy and along the way the policy lost its focus and the Indian central government helped to build up Tamil militancy. As a journalist I never supported the Eelam demand but in practice we tended to go along with this policy. I was also a believer in that policy which I now call 'schizoid' as I said in my lecture on Monday. I certainly believed in the Indian attempts to provide good offices for negotiations from the G. Parathasarathy days right up to the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement. My involvement came only along the track of coverage, detailed coverage. We saw ourselves as professionals covering various Sri Lankan Tamil organisations including the LTTE.

Q: ***You were in The Hindu at that time?***

A: I was Associate Editor of *The Hindu* – I am still in the same organisation. I was writing most of the editorials and analytical pieces on Sri Lanka. We began to cover this seriously, particularly after the anti-Tamil pogrom in July 1983 when there was intensive coverage in *The Hindu.* In fact in the initial period, till about 1985, there was very little focus on the LTTE. For one thing they were not accessible. Secondly, sitting in Madras, it was not clear who was the principal player. Some time after Rajiv Gandhi took over, in late 1984, the militants were being fielded as players in the negotiations. They came to Thimpu in 1985. Then the assessment was that the TULF had been marginalised and you had to deal with all the groups and, particularly, the LTTE. It was only then that our coverage began to reflect it. Because it basically reflected the positions taken in Madras by the various Sri Lankan Tamil organisations. So between 1983 and 1985 it was largely a coverage of the TULF negotiating position till LTTE representatives came to us. And they were very open; you know, they had legitimacy at that point. They were dealing with governments, both Centre and State. It's not that people were very euphoric about what lay in store as militancy advanced. The militants did a number of awful things – the killing of the TELO leadership, the Anuradhapura massacre. But the perception was that they could be brought into a framework. That you could put pressure on the negotiating process by their struggle advancing but without letting them set the terms. This proved to be a fatal flaw in the policy. Where I came in was some time in 1986/87 when I began to be regarded as a specialist in India as a journalist and analyst on the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict. Because of our coverage of the militant phenomenon, the negotiations, the bilateral dealings between the governments of India and Sri Lanka, it was presumed that we had quite a lot of insight. I was approached by people on both sides; by both governments. I gave my opinion. I came here to interview President Jayewardhene in February 1987 and this became an 'off the record' discussion.

Q: ***Did you bring any proposals?***

A: I did not bring any proposals then. But when they asked my opinions I gave it. It was not very different from what I had written publicly. I believed you had to devolve power, you had to make changes in a federal direction. It was not just me. A lot of people believed that. I also emphasised the importance of merging the North and the East. That kind of input, you see – purely when somebody asks. Beyond that I think my role has been exaggerated. I certainly conveyed an assessment of what I thought the LTTE was up to, and the Indian government was up to. And likewise, in India, I conveyed what I had picked up here. So in that sense this information input may have made some difference. But beyond that I was not part of any negotiation. Although I did participate in some long sessions with Dixit and President Jayewardene along with some others – they were not discussions, I certainly did not broker.

Q: ***When was that?***

A: That was in February 1987, and there was a follow up.

Q: *In Colombo?*

A: Yes, in Colombo. There were more than ten hours of intensive discussion. People were agonising over what to do. I met various players.

Q: *Who else was there?*

A: I met Lalith, I met Gamini, and other players. But mainly J.R., and Dixit who is now Foreign Secretary.

Q: *What was your sense, at that time, of the attitude of the Sri Lankan side?*

A: They were agonising over a solution to the problem and they were serious about it. There was a chauvinistic attitude here; a hawkish attitude also. But I was impressed by the fact that the Sri Lankan government leadership was willing to go as far it was. This was appreciated in India. To agree to a provisional merger, to bring the Indian army into the theatre to guarantee the settlement, was a major step which required a lot of political courage. It was a real step forward.

Q: *Are you as involved today as you were at that time? Or are you now more of an observer; a commentator?*

A: I'm not as active as that because Indian policy has become somewhat inert, or inactive. So there is no question of my playing a role. Because I don't play an independent role. It is part of a policy response or, what I would call a 'democratic' response. Today I hope some solution could be found. But the limitations of what you can do even with the influence of your ideas is now apparent. In contrast to that period, today it is mainly a question for Sri Lankans to decide themselves. If my ideas are asked I'll give them.

Q: *What is your perception of the interplay today between the Sri Lankan conflict and politics in Tamil Nadu?*

A: This interplay is basically over. I think those mistakes will not be made again.

Q: *Could cross-border ethnic sympathies be revived? Could there be a popular response to any attempt, by Tamil Nadu politicians, to arouse sentiment for the Eelam cause? There are reports that Jayalalitha may be up to something like this.*

A: Such sympathies will not be revived because people in India, particularly politicians in Tamil Nadu, have learnt their lesson. Public opinion is remarkably unsympathetic towards the Sri Lankan Tamil militants. In fact it is extremely hostile to the LTTE. This is evident from polls and the results of elections held. They are probably regarded as terrorists. Whether some horrible attack on civilians, if it takes place (I hope it doesn't), would fuel some accusations of hobnobbing with the LTTE. This has to be watched. Because earlier she was soft on them. After all, it was not Karunanidhi who helped the LTTE in practical terms but the MGR government. Jayalalitha once said that 'they are young and idealistic. But after she became Chief Minister she took several steps. That was a reaction to the assassination of Rajiv and the clear evidence we got of the LTTE's hand in it. But today there will be little support for anyone who appeared to be backing the LTTE. Recently Karunanidhi said that 'we have no sympathy for the Militants'. But he said however that 'this does not mean we have no sympathy for the Sri Lankan Tamils'.

Q: *That qualification is crucial. The question arises why, if there is absolutely no possibility of using popular responses to this issue, would Nedumaran spend time on filing a case to block refugee repatriation?*

A: Nedumaran is in clear sympathy with the Eelam cause. These are individuals on the fringe who don't represent any kind of popular opinion. But there is residual moral feeling about the fate of the refugees because they are the victims of the ethnic conflict. The denial by the Jayalalitha government of access to higher education for Sri Lankan refugee children is morally wrong. But Jayalalitha's perception is that you can't bear the burden for any longer – let them go back. But you can't drive back people. The resistance has been to that. But that does not reflect sympathy for the militants.

Q: *What of Tamil Nadu politics of Dravidian nationalism?*

A: People like Ramdas are only a fringe. The two main parties of the Dravidian movement, the DMK and AIA-DMK, are not going to support the militants at all. This has happened before and it is legitimate to raise the question. But this is not a factor today, short of some extreme genocidal event. If (for argument's sake, I hope it doesn't happen) a thousand people get butchered, then who knows? But public opinion is against the way the militants have handled things. Today people in Tamil Nadu are likely to blame the LTTE far more than they would blame the chauvinists on the other side.

Q: *Five years ago, in the Vadamaarachchi offensive of 1987, there was a high popular response in South India to the predicament of the Sri Lankan Tamils. Today the conditions, on the ground, of the people of Jaffna are much worse and you, yourself observed in your lecture on Monday that a possible military thrust into Jaffna is on the cards. Would you see an irony in that there may be less sympathy in South India today?*

A: Today it is dramatically different. I would say that the likely response would be a deafening silence.

Q: *Despite a worsened predicament?*

A: Yes. India helped build up the militants' strength. And this has helped make the situation worse. Today most people would say that the LTTE is the main obstacle to a reasonable, democratic solution. If I said just this it would be one-sided, but that is the perception today. The earlier policy is now seen as a major misadventure. So there is a process of over-reaction, of over-correction, which means today that it is none of India's business. It is now 'hands off'.

Q: *Was India's covert support for the militants at that time intended merely to ensure a settlement? Wasn't there a second motive, as well, to influence foreign policy in the context of bi-polar global politics?*

A: That is true. But the foreign policy baggage came along riding piggy back on the response to the major issue which was the ethnic conflict. Had that crisis not been there I doubt very much that these factors would have come in. Although there may have been some vague interest post-1981, India did not have substantial interaction with the Sri Lanka crisis until the pressing situation developed in 1983. Even the concerns over the Israeli element and Trincomalee – had there been no such ethnic crisis there would have been no occasion for India to bring into play its foreign policy concerns. But today, minus India's role in guaranteeing the solution to the ethnic conflict, nobody in India thinks that the rest of the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement is a live package.

Q: *How far is India going to persist in its criminalization of Prabhakaran? Is India likely to make this an obstacle to Sri Lankan attempts to negotiate with the LTTE? Is this some kind of hint to Colombo of Delhi's intention of remaining involved in the Sri Lankan crisis?*

A: The investigators have established a consistent pattern of LTTE operatives and sympathisers carrying out the assassination. It is absolutely clear that the order came from the top. To prove this Prabhakaran has to be brought to trial. Extradition becomes

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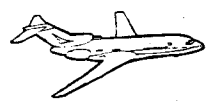

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NEWS ROUND-UP

● **PRESIDENT PREMADASA,** addressing a meeting on 23 August at Talawakelle in the central Kandy district said: 'Tamil plantation workers of Indian origin will not be left in the lurch. They have been living in our country for generations under trying and difficult conditions. If one were to go into the caste, creed, race, religion and place of birth of each and every individual, then government cannot mete out justice; then justice and fair play will be denied'.

'Mr. S. Thondaman gives leadership to the estate workers. Some try to create the impression that Mr. Thondaman is a racist and he is pro-Indian. I have known him well and associated with him closely. I know he is neither a racist or pro-Indian. But Thondaman fights against injustice', he added.

● **THE SWISS** government is seriously considering repatriating Sri Lankan refugees in that country to the island. A delegation of the Swiss government visited Sri Lanka in early August to study the situation and had interviews with several government officials and non-governmental organisations.

TULF Member of Parliament for Batticaloa, Mr. Joseph Pararajasingham, who met the Swiss team said that the modus operandi of the repatriation programme was that the refugees would be sent in batches and initially they would be kept in Colombo. The Swiss government would provide all assistance to the returnees for a period of one month. If the Sri Lankan government agreed to the proposal, the programme would be implemented soon.

Mr. Pararajasingham told the Swiss team that the situation in the North-East was not conducive for resettling refugees and requested that the decision to return the refugees should be reconsidered.

● **INDIAN** Home Minister S.B. Chavan recently revealed to press reporters in Goa that the Indian government had information that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were 'purchasing real estate property in Bangalore under benami transactions and it cannot be ruled out that Goa had not attracted their attention'.

● **AT LEAST** 35 Tamil persons, including women and 11 children were hacked or shot to death by an armed 'unidentified' gang on 6 August at Mahilanthanai, remote village on the Batticaloa-Polonnaruwa border. According to the TULF MP for the area, Joseph Pararajasingham, twelve of the victims belonged to the same family; ten more who were injured in the attack had been admitted to the hospital; and out of fear the other inhabitants had fled the village and sought safety in a refugee camp in Valaichanai. The gang had abducted 9 villagers including two women, and a search party recovered their bodies in a decomposed state deep inside the nearby jungles on 12 August. Most of the victims of this massacre were Tamils of Indian origin from the plantations who had settled as farmers in the eastern province after the communal violence of August 1977.

The attack on the village occurred the day after the landmine blast in which ten of the senior army officers, including Maj. Gen. Kobbekaduwa and Brig. Wimalaratne were killed in Jaffna. Eye-witness reports by some survivors reveal that the attackers were dressed in army-type uniforms and were armed with guns and swords. At the request of Mr. Pararajasingham, the government has ordered an inquiry into the massacre and granted Rs. 2000 in respect of each of the victims as funeral expenses to be paid to the nearest relative.

● **MILITARY SOURCES** claimed that following launching of 'Operation Earthquake' in the northern Jaffna peninsula, government troops captured a key 'Sea Tiger' base off Mathagal on the north-west coast of the peninsula on 21 August after meeting 'some resistance from the Tigers'. It was reported that five army battle groups, backed by T-55 battle tanks and Buffel armoured personnel carriers on their flanks moved on a broad front of advance and destroyed three Sea Tiger camps in Madagal capturing an area of about 18 square kilometres as attack aircraft and navy gunboats bombarded LTTE positions to support the ground troops. About 300 civilians are reported to have remained in the area captured and brought under the control of troops. The army claimed that one soldier was killed and 18 injured and several LTTE cadres were killed, including some area leaders identified as Ilango, Nesan, Kanthan, Kailas and Aruldasan. The LTTE admitted that the commander of the 'Charles Anthony Brigade', Somasuntharam Satkunam alias Rajan and two captains Ganeshan alias Puniyammorthy of Trincomalee and Vanni alias Kanapathippillai Kananathan of Kokkavil Road, Thunukkai had been killed in a counter offensive launched by the LTTE at Madagal on 24 August.

On 28 August, LTTE cadres attacked army forward defence lines near Vettilaikerni in the Jaffna district overrunning three defence bunkers and killing five soldiers.

Meanwhile it was reported that the LTTE had successfully hijacked a naval high speed dinghy fitted with guns which was anchored off the Mandaitivu coast near the naval base. The naval craft had 900 rounds of ammunition, a VHF communications set and life jackets. The five naval crew in charge of the craft had gone ashore during the night to rest when LTTE cadres had carried out their take over. Later, reports from Jaffna said that the LTTE had displayed the dinghy for public exhibition.

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is hardly any space for another third party mediator, within or outside the South Asian region.

Tamil-Muslim conflicts in the East have not only terminated the validity of the old formulation of ethnic homogeneity of 'Tamil-speaking people', but also made sharing of power between Tamil and Muslim communities in the East immensely problematic.

In Sinhalese society, the sheer inability of political and ideological leaders to come to grips with the basics of the ethnic question has paralyzed its soul, if it had one. So, Despite efforts made by affable Mangala-Moonesinghe of the Select Committee, the carnage may go on and on.

This is not to argue that the Accord has lost its significance for Sri Lankan politics. Even with its inability to assert a politico-diplomatic validity, it has paradoxically provided a discourse within which political debate concerning some workable solution to the ethnic question can even be conceived.

Multi-ethnic character of Sri Lankan society, devolution and provincial councils, and merger of North-East provinces are the key formulations that are inscribed in the Accord and found their way to the political and constitutional debate. For that alone, long live the memory of the Indo-Lanka Accord.

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THE SUB-CONTINENTAL SCENE

★ Congress(I) Strengthened as Janata Dal Splinters

Janata Dal led by former Prime Minister, V.P. Singh, which emerged as the major national centrist alternative to the Congress(I), has virtually lost its position both on the national political scene and in Parliament mainly due to internal faction fighting and open splits. With the recent defection of 20 MPs from its ranks – and more reportedly in the offing – and the Speaker's controversial ruling allocating separate seats in the House to the breakaway group, the ills of Janata Dal has turned almost terminal and the fortunes of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and his Congress(I) government have greatly improved.

With the untimely removal of its leader by an assassin during the election campaign last year, Congress(I) under the leadership of Mr. Rao just managed to form a minority government without an overall majority in the House. With the probability of the breakaway group of MPs joining the Congress(I), it has not only achieved a stable and strong position but also an overall majority of one in the House. The Rao government no longer needs to pander to the whims of minority parties upon whose votes it depended for its continuance in office.

The defections in the Janata Dal while being largely due to inner conflicts – personal and ideological – have also been helped by clever 'political engineering' by the politically adroit Mr. Rao; he is no longer regarded as 'Pending and Vacillating Narasimha Rao'! On the other hand, the gradual fragmentation of the Janata Dal and the fissures affecting the somewhat loosely knit National Front it headed earning it the nickname 'Notional Front' mark the end of opposition unity in the Indian Parliament. The days of the National Front seem to be numbered as the constituent parties comprising it would appear to have decided to go their own ways.

With more defections predicted from its ranks, the future prospects of the Janata Dal and its leader V.P. Singh seem bleak.

With the emergence of Mr. Rao as a shrewd party leader with his consensus style of leadership, trends point in the direction of a growing feeling of confidence that Congress(I) will not only stay in power for the full duration of the parliamentary term, but also will have a headstart to win the next elections whenever they are held.

Narasimha Rao seems to have learnt one lesson which the Gandhi leadership failed to realise, and which even V.P. Singh with his personal style of leadership failed to appreciate, namely that the 'one leader centralisation syndrome' would not work in the India of today.

★ Financial Scandal Deepens

The sensational securities and stock-market scandal in India took a dramatic turn when the Central Bureau of Investigation moved swiftly and arrested one of India's top technocrats and member of the prestigious Planning Commission, Venkataraman Krishnamoorthy, recipient of India's highest award Padma Vibhushan in 1989.

As the investigation deepens and the scare scenario increases, more powerful heads are rolling and more and more powerful names are being mentioned. There is intense speculation in Delhi that several of India's top bureaucrats and even some cabinet ministers (already Commerce Minister Chidamparam is a fallen victim) may be involved in the unprecedented scam. Even senior personnel of the Reserve Bank of India are not free from the growing suspicion of connivance with the 'Big Bull' Harshad Mehta. It is said that the Bank's systems are among the best in the world – almost a carbon copy of those of the Bank of England – and therefore it is not the system that has failed, but the men behind the system have clearly and cleverly protected the manipulators of the system!

The recent comment by Prime Minister Rao calling for a moratorium on 'divisive' issues has added fuel to the flames of suspicion that a damage-limitation exercise in the form of a cover-up (as in the Bofors case) may be under way. Few are satisfied with his repeated assertions that no more ministers of his government are linked to the scandal.

The sudden resignation of the joint director of the CBI, K. Madhavan, who initiated and pursued the investigation with vigour, has set off a blaze of controversy – was he forced to resign because he was getting too close to too many in too high a position with his investigations? In the meantime, the CBI has decided to question the Governor of the Reserve Bank Mr. Venkataraman and its Finance Secretary, Geeta Krishnan over their telephone conversations with Krishnamoorthy now in jail.

★ Indo-Pakistan Relations

In spite of the deeply held belief in India that Pakistan is covertly supporting separatist and violent activities in Kashmir and Punjab, the two sides have, after two years, to resume dialogue even on such sensitive issues as Kashmir, the Siachen Glacier and nuclear non-proliferation.

While India's Foreign Secretary J.N. Dixit described the talks as merely 'practical and constructive', and brought the problems 'now much nearer to solution'. He added that both countries had decided to pull back their troops from the much disputed Siachen, the 20,000 feet high glacier in the Himalayas over which the two countries have been sporadically fighting over the last eight years.

In a letter delivered to the Indian Premier Narasimha Rao, the Prime Minister of Pakistan had proposed that the two countries discuss a 'final settlement' on the basis of the Simla Agreement. India which had traditionally adopted the position that Kashmir was 'an integral part of India' and refused even to recognise or discuss the Kashmir problem as a 'dispute' has of late shown some flexibility in its approach. On the basis of this change of stance, political observers speculate that if Pakistan were to stop supporting separatist and violent activities in Kashmir and Punjab, India would consider a territorial adjustment over Kashmir in return.

The two countries have also agreed for the first time to discuss the thorny issue of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons on a bilateral basis. Apparently in response to a diplomatic row between the two countries following a recent incident in which an Indian diplomat was taken into custody and reportedly maltreated by Pakistani intelligence service personnel, the two countries also signed an agreement on a code of conduct for the treatment of each others' diplomats.

Recent developments point towards a thawing in Indo-Pakistani relations, a welcome trend on the sub-continent after decades of tension and conflict.

★ Three More Official Languages

India's Constitution was amended for the 71st time in 42 years since independence when three more languages, Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali, were added to the list of India's official languages bringing the total to 18.

There are more than one hundred spoken languages and 1800 dialects in India which has today a population of 840 million people; most of the lan-

guages belong to the Dravidian or Indo-European family of languages; a few belong to the European family; Manipuri is a language that is more than 2000 years old; Konkani is the language of the people of Goa who inhabit an area from Bombay to Cochin.

Official recognition of a language confers several benefits: it is recognised as the medium of instruction in schools in the concerned State; currency bills carry denominations in all officially recognised languages and all federal government Acts of Parliament are made available in these languages, and all official work in the concerned State is done through that language.

In India, there is no 'national language'. Hindi is the official language with English being accorded the status of an associate language; English is used for communication between the federal government and State governments that have not chosen to adopt Hindi as the official language.

On this thorny issue of an official language, the first Prime Minister of independent India Jawaharlal Nehru said when confronted with a demand for abolishing the use of English, 'I wish to avoid the danger of one unifying factor being pushed out without another unifying factor fully taking its place. English will therefore continue to have an important place in the foreseeable future'.

★ India's New Vice-President

Kocheril Raman Narayanan, 72 years, was sworn in as India's new Vice-President on 21 August. It was a historic occasion as he is the first Harijan to occupy the second most exalted position in India.

After a short stint as a university lecturer, Narayanan worked with two national newspapers, *The Hindu* and *The Times of India* before joining the Indian Foreign Service in 1949. He rose to be India's Ambassador in the U.S., was later elected thrice to the Lok Sabah (India's House of Commons) and served as a minister in the Rajiv Gandhi government. He secured 700 votes in India's Parliament, the highest ever obtained by any Vice-President.

Narayanan's election has been described as marking a milestone in India's march towards secularism. And true secularism is reached when one does not remember one's religion or caste, said Ziakir Hussein, a former President of India.

Was it his impressive and versatile track record as journalist, diplomat, academic, parliamentarian and cabinet minister that took him to the Vice-Presidential seat, or was it his caste (a member of the Parava caste whose traditional vocation was to be pluckers of coconuts)? His response was that 'it is an expression of Indian philosophy which has as its core a dormant sense of social justice'.

★ Political Killings Mount in Bangladesh

Frenzied political killings have emerged as a new phenomenon in Bangladeshi politics, and tension is growing because of polarisation of 'pro-liberation' and 'fundamentalist' parties.

The latest victim of political reprisal is a leading leftist Member of Parliament, Rashed Khan Menon. Menon, 52, a top-level student leader in the early 1960s who is general secretary of the Workers Party, was attacked by gunmen on 17 August and critically wounded. Two weeks previously, a veteran Communist leader, Raten Sen, was murdered in the southern city of Khulna in broad daylight.

Several low-ranking leaders of the largest opposition party, the Awami League, also have been killed in recent months. Many more are reportedly on a hit-list released recently by a politically inspired group called Indian Collaborators Killers Committee.

The resurgence of political killings in Bangladesh emerged following a decision late last year by the fundamentalist Jammat-e-Islami to elect Prof. Golam Azam, Bangladeshi-born Pakistani citizen, as party leader. The party, which had opposed Bangladeshi independence, has been accused of aiding genocide and rape in collaboration with Pakistani occupation forces in 1971.

Reacting to the attack on Menon, Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina Wazed said: 'I have no words to condemn the incident; everybody's life is insecure today. Now the question is whether there is a government in the country or not'.

Prof. Jahanara Imam, leader of the Committee for Implementation of the Spirit of the Liberation and Annihilation of the Collaborators of the Pakistani Army in 1971, told a rally that Menon had been attacked by forces that oppose the country's independence. 'I am swearing in your name that we will not back out from the ongoing movement against the anti-liberation forces', he added.

According to the opposition, the law and order situation in the country has deteriorated during the 18 month rule of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and reports of killings, hijacking, arson and kidnapping had become common. Meanwhile, the government began a drive called 'August Campaign' against 'evil-doers', and so far over 10,000 persons have been taken into custody on various charges. But the political killings continue unabated.

The Opposition charges that the fundamentalist Jammat and its student wing, Chhatra Shibir (students camp) along with the Freedom Party and Juba Command (youth force) backed by the Freedom Party, are behind the killings of pro-liberation forces.

As the political killings continue and the law and order situation is getting out of control, the government of Begum Khaleda Zia appears to be in a dilemma not knowing what to do.

★ US Arms Sales to Pakistan Assailed

Ralph Earle, Chairman of the Lawyers Alliance for World Security (LAWS), a former director of the Arms, Control and Disarmament Agency, and former member of the US delegation to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, in a statement to the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has attacked the Bush administration's decision to allow continued arms sales to Pakistan despite the President's inability to make a Pressler amendment certificate.

In his statement, Mr. Earle said that in getting around the restraints of the amendment, the Administration was 'both violating US law and contradicting its own initiative on non-proliferation'. He asserted that the State Department's contentions that the sales are legal were 'largely of bootstrap variety' and did not address what was really at issue – the purpose of the Pressler amendment itself.

The Pressler amendment (named after Republican Senator Larry Pressler who was the author of the amendment) requires that 'no assistance shall be furnished to Pakistan and no military equipment or technology shall be sold or transferred to Pakistan' if the President cannot certify that it does not possess a nucler weapon.

Mr. Earle said that by permitting military equipment and technology to be sold to Pakistan, the Bush administration was 'probably contributing to that nation's nuclear weapon's delivery capability'. He added that CIA director Robert Gates had testified publicly before the Government Affairs Committee on 15 January that

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Pakistan's fleet of American-built F-16s was capable of delivering nuclear weapons. 'Thus we have apparently ignored Pakistani development of nuclear weapons while at the same time supplying them with a nuclear delivery capability'.

Mr. Earle declared that it was time for the Administration 'to stop sending the Pakistani government misleading signals' and warned that this 'may unwittingly create another Iraq-like situation in South Asia'. To avoid even the slightest possibility of such a situation, 'the Pressler amendment should be enforced in its entirety and not selectively', thereby 'sending the clear message which is needed to clarify any ambiguity which may have risen about American policy towards the Pakistani nuclear bomb program'.

★ 32 Face 'Secessionist' Charges

MADRAS, Aug. 26.

The Tamil Nadu Special Investigation Team (TANSIT) today filed the chargesheet against Pottu Amman, intelligence chief of the LTTE and 31 others who formed the Tamil National Retrieval Troop (TNRT) to achieve secession of Tamil Nadu from the Indian Union.

According to the 64-page chargesheet citing 320 witnesses filed before Mr. M. Soundarapandian, Additional Judge of the Designated Court, the TNRT, an armed force was formed at the behest of the LTTE to overawe the Tamil Nadu Government and achieve secession of the State from the Indian Union.

The accused, 12 of whom, including Pottu Amman listed as absconding and proclaimed offenders have been charged under various provisions of TADA Act, Arms Act, Explosives Substances Act, Indian Wireless Telegraph Act, Passports Act and Immigration Act.

Contours of plot: The chargesheet said that a number of youths from Tamil Nadu were actively assisted by Pottu Amman in clandestinely going to Sri Lanka and being trained in the handling of automatic firearms and explosives. The acts were done in furtherance of a conspiracy hatched at Palaly in Sri Lanka, Udumalpet and Kaniyur in Coimbatore district, Vaniyambadi in North Arcot-Ambedkar district, Palani, Dindigul in Anna district and Pudukottai.

The aim of the TNRT was to indulge in disruptive activities, make preparation to fulfil their objectives, procure arms and ammunition, bombs, wireless sets and other explosive substances, loot police armouries in the State and strike terror among the people by killing public servants or persons bound by oath under the Constitution to uphold the sovereignty and integrity of India the chargesheet said.

The accused: The accused in the chargesheet are Ravi alias Ravichandran (23) of Aruppukottai, Suseendran alias Mahesh (32) of Manickavasaganagar, Paulraj alias Mohan (29) of Palani, Veerakumar alias Srikanth (22) of Udumalpet, Tirunavukkarasu alias Muthu (27) of Palani, Sekar alias Bharath (27) of Karaikkudi, Duraisamy alias Sundar (21) of Udumalpet, Shanmugham alias Senguttuvan (29(of Dharapuram, Chellamuthu alias Thamizhan (27) of Dharapuram, Arumugham alias Ilamugundan (30) of Dharapuram (Periyar district), Murugan alias Murugasamy (27) of Palani, Jawahar Habeeb alias Jawahar (30) of Palani, Sathiyamurthy (28) of Palani, Marimuthu (26) of Palani, Kumar alias Thali Kumar (22) of Udumalpet, Theodore Charles (31) of Dindigul, Jothi alias Jothi Venkatachalam (28) of Kodiakkarai (Vedaranyam police station limits), Subramaniam alias Valmanickkam (27) of Kodiakkadu (Nagapattinam Quaid-e-Milleth district), Romeo alias Sathish (30) of Nilaveli, Trincomalee and Anthony Simonraj alias Murali (27) of Paramakudi (Ramanathapuram district).

The listed absconding accused (proclaimed offenders) are Pottu Amman, Suresh alias Meyyappan (23) of Ukkadam (Coimbatore city), Guna alias Gunasekaran alias Sankaramurthi (20) of Palani, Kumar alias Periannan (28) of Ponneri (Chengalpattu-MGR East district), Balan alias Balasubramanian (23) of Pushpathur (Palani), Mariappan (27) of Karikkaranpudur (Palani), Pandian alias Muthukumar (24) of Peelamedu (Coimbatore), Prabhakaran (26) of Pollachi Town, Kantyhan alias Neelan and Ramanan, LTTE cadres.

The chief of the investigating team, Mr. Prakash Chandra Pant, who filed the charge sheet in the court of the special judge Mr. Soundarapandian, told newsmen that it was a 'very important case'.

'They were about to start the armed secessionist movement when we nabbed the ring leaders', Mr. Pant said.

'They had chalked out plans to raid the Palani camp of the Seventh battalion of the Tamil Nadu armed police. They had maps of the camp with them. They were also planning to kill government and police officers in a bid to terrorise the population and overawe the state authorities', the investigating officer said.

Mr. Pant said that sixteen members of the TNRF were sent to Jaffna for training in the use of explosives, sabotage and automatic weapons. Ten of them had returned to India.

He said that police had recovered explosives, ammunition, wireless equipment, cash and gold, from the accused.

Of the twenty persons now in custody, the most important is Ravi alias Ravichandran alias Srikanth, of Arupukkottai in Karajar district. This 23-year-old boy is the founder of the TNRF and a close associate of one of the LTTE's spokesmen, 'Kittu' and the LTTE intelligence chief Pottu Amman. He was one of sixteen trained by the LTTE in Jaffna.

★ 26 Charged in Padmanabha Murder Case

MADRAS, Aug. 12.

The Tamil Nadu Special Investigation Team (TANSIT) today filed the chargesheet in the 'Padmanabha murder case' before the Designated Judge, Mr. S.M. Siddickk, citing 26 persons, including the former Home Secretary, Mr. R. Nagarajan, and the former DMK Minister, Mrs. Subbulakshmi Jagadeesan, as accused.

A team of officers, led by Mr. P.C. Pant, Inspector General of Police, TANSIT, filed the chargesheet, running to 12 pages, and 250 pages of supporting documents. About 300 persons have been cited as witnesses.

The conspiracy: According to the chargesheet, the conspiracy to murder Padmanabha and others was hatched in Jaffna, Tiruchi and Madras. It attributed the motive to long-time rivalry between the LTTE and the EPRLF. When the North East Provincial Council was formed and Mr. Varadaraja Perumal became the Chief Minister, the EPRLF had allegedly committed atrocities against the LTTE. To wreak vengeance, the LTTE decided to kill both Mr. Varadaraja Perumal and Padmanabha. The latter was killed on June 19, 1990, at Kodambakkam in Madras.

The following are the 26 accused: Pottu Amman (A1), Sivarajan (A2), David (A3), Dhileepan (A4), Daniel (A5), Ravi (A6), Santhan alias Suthinthararaja (A7), Gundu Santhan (A8), Vicky alias Vigneswaran (A9), R. Nagarajan (A10), Rajan alias Kunjan (A11), Kiruban (A12), Maruthanayagam (A13), Jayabalasingam (A14), Chandravadhana (A15), Nagarajah (A16), Vasanthan alias Vasanthakumar (A17), Anandaraj

(A18), Sebastian (A19), Mahendraraja (A20), Gunaraja (A21), Irumborai (A22), Veerasekaran (A23), Subbulakshmi Jagadeesan (A24), Jagadeesan (A25), and V. Ravichandran (A26). A1 to A9, A11 and A12, A14 to A17 and A20 to A22 were members of the LTTE. The killer squad comprised A2 to A7.

Of the 26 accused, Sivarajan and Gundu Santhan are dead. Pottu Aman, Daniel, David, Dhileepan, Ravi and Nagarajah are absconding. Among the remaining 18, three persons – Veerasekaran and Marudanayagam, advocates and former Home Secretary, R. Nagarajan – were released on bail.

Talking to presspersons, Mr. Pant said though the LTTE was responsible for the murder of the EPRLF leader there was no evidence to connect the involvement of the LTTE supremo Prabhakaran in this case and hence he had not been cited as an accused. He said a total of 36 persons were arrested in this case. But later 10 persons were released for want of evidence.

He said the former Home Secretary has been charged with conspiracy to murder the EPRLF leader and also for abetment and harbouring the accused. The former DMK Minister, Mrs. Subbulakshmi Jagadeesan, her husband and Ravichandran (younger brother of V. Gopalasami, DMK MP) have been arraigned as accused for abetting and harbouring the accused.

Referring to Veerasekaran's petition that his name should not figure in the chargesheet, he said according to the TANSIT's investigation he was an accused and hence his name had been included in the chargesheet.

Asked as to when the trial would begin, he said it had to be decided only by the Designated Court. It would take some time as the accused should be served with a copy of the chargesheet. The venue of the trial would be decided later.

★ Sikhs and Hindus Flee Afghanistan

Pakistan's embassy in Kabul has begun issuing visas to Afghan Sikh and Hindu minorities trying to flee the fighting in the Afghan capital which was subjected to relentless rocket bombardment. By August 20, the embassy had issued over 1600 visas to members of non-Muslim minorities.

The move by Pakistan to issue visas marked a shift from its previous policy not to grant visas to Sikhs and Hindus on the ground that they could be Indian spies.

Most of the 25,000 Sikhs and about 5,000 Hindus in Kabul's population of 1.5 million moved to Afghanistan in the mid-19th century. Sikh and Hindu families arriving at the Pakistan border told of persecution at the hands of the fundamentalist mujahideen who entered Kabul with the new government in April, and the Uzbek militia of the former Communist government.

The wealth of the Sikhs and Hindus makes them a conspicuous target for many of the armed groups who kidnap the men for ransom. Western diplomats say that kidnapping of Hindus and Sikhs is common in Kabul with many would-be kidnappers staking out the Pakistan embassy for potential victims arriving to apply for visas. Even poorer Sikhs and Hindus are said to be at risk because kidnappers know that the close-knit family members would band together to pay the ransoms. 'Some kidnappers even demand the ransom in US dollars, and a figure of $5,000 is not uncommon', according to a diplomat.

★ Jayalalitha Rebuts Dr. Swamy's Charges of 'Contacts with Tigers'

NEW DELHI, Aug. 26.

Jayaram Jayalalitha, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, yesterday denied the charge that she has established contacts with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) through emissaries in Singapore and Paris.

The denial came in a statement she made in Madras, on 24 August, that the temperamental woman Chief Minister had contacted the LTTE in Singapore and Paris through emissaries and offered to pay 'protection money' to the Tamil Tigers – as LTTE activists are known – for her personal protection.

The controversial Dr. Swamy, who tends to make wild charges against people in power to grab newspaper headlines, had also said that the contacts were established in June this year, and that this was the reason why there has been a slackening of the anti-LTTE drive by the State police, leading to the smuggling of diesel and medicines to the Jaffna Peninsula from the Tamil Nadu coast.

Reacting sharply to Dr. Swamy's charges, Ms. Jayalalitha branded the Harvard-educated politician as a 'pathological liar' and declared that they were nothing but 'utter falsehood'.

She also dismissed as 'a conscious and deliberate lie' Dr. Swamy's charge that she had ordered the tapping of the telephones of 28 prominent politicans and journalists including Dr. Swamy.

Ms. Jayalalitha maintained that she has neither compromised her commitment to root out the LTTE from Tamil Nadu soil, nor has she betrayed the mandate the people gave her in June last year in the wake of the brutal assassination of her electoral ally and former Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi at an election rally at Sriperumbudur near Madras by Dhanu, a woman activist of the LTTE.

In that election campaign, she had vowed to eliminate the LTTE from the state and won with an impressive majority. Later, she kept up pressure on LTTE activists and went all out to weed them out from the state.

Levelling such wild charges against her when she had risked her own life by opposing the LTTE tooth and nail in the interest of India's security and sovereignty is to negate all that she has struggled for in the past one year as the state's Chief Minister, she pointed out. (She is reportedly on the LTTE's hit list).

Dr. Swamy's charge that her emissaries met LTTE men abroad is nothing but a figment of his fevered imagination. 'I do not have any emissaries in Paris or in Singapore or anywhere else,' she added.

'I have no links with the liberation Tigers, either directly or through agents.'

'I will never deviate from the goal of rooting out the LTTE from Tamil Nadu. I will never back out of the election promise made to the Tamil Nadu people in 1991'.

'Subramaniam Swamy says that he has evidence. If he has evidence why does he not present them? Why not now?', the Chief Minister and the General Secretary of the ruling All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) asked.

'I have not slackened one bit in my efforts to break the back of the LTTE in Tamil Nadu,' she maintained.

'The propaganda that Tigers are now on the prowl in Tamil Nadu, is being carried on by my political enemies, to tarnish the image of my government,' Ms. Jayalalitha held.

I have been working to safeguard the unity and integrity of the country to rid the state of the LTTE even at the risk of my life,' Ms. Jayalalitha said.

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BOOK REVIEW

A down-to-earth retelling

Indo-West Asian Relations: The Nehru Era: Najma Heptulla; Allied Publishers; Rs. 250.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU was, in some part, a romantic. He quickened the dead past with the glow of his questing mind and saw in it a stage in the proud pageant of mankind. Something of that magic of the past comes through in the second chapter of Dr. Najma Heptulla's book on Nehru and West Asia, for that chapter leans heavily on Nehru's writings, but, alas, it is not carried through the book. Nothing, neither revolutionary situations and the small change of revolutions, such as the hacking-down of Nuri Said, burqa-clad in a vain attempt to escape popular wrath, nor Great Power machinations, reprehensible as they are, nor great figures, such as Kemal Attaturk, or figures of the stuff of drama, such as T.E. Lawrence 'backing into the limelight', nothing tempts Dr. Najma Heptulla from the straight and narrow path of a down-to-earth retelling of a historic story.

That story is of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism in the present Arab lands, first against Turkey, then against the European Powers, with the connecting thread of India's and, more especially, Nehru's attitude running through it. By bringing together in one place, concisely and factually, an account of the struggle in various countries, Dr. Najma Heptulla's book serves a useful reference purpose.

'The Palestine Question' has a chapter to itself, tracing briefly and lucidly the history of settlers in the area, contrasting interestingly the Beni Israel tribe of about 1500 B.C. with the Palestinian Arabs, and carrying the story to the present day. There is also a separate chapter on the Nasser-Nehru relationship. The separate treatment from the rest of the book of these two subjects is appropriate, for one is still a determining factor in West Asian and, indeed, world politics, and the other was of primary importance at a crucial time in West Asian history.

The utility of the book is enhanced by the 29 appendices, stretching from the texts of the Sykes Picot Agreement of May 1916 to the Non-Aligned Cairo communique of October 1964. These include such well-known documents as the Bandung Declaration and lesser-known, but important, documents, such as the Declaration to the Seven of June 1918 and India's proposals at the Suez Conference of August 1956. With the factual information thus handily available, the book could appropriately be entitled: 'The intelligent school leaver's guide to contemporary West Asia: the background and Nehru's attitude.'

Even from this slender volume, historical parallels cannot be missed. The French divide Syria on religious lines and introduce separate electorates; the Russians and British sign an agreement dividing the then Persia into three zones, with a neutral zone dividing the Russian and British zones; Mehmed Ali dangles before the Arabs the prospect of an Arab empire after the Turks are expelled from Syria; compare the British and Arabs later. 'The Turks,' says the author, 'had perfected the art of setting (Arab) communities at one another's throats, and teaching that local politics of a province were more important than nationality.' The shape of things to come in India, yes; but also an ominous warning to today's India. It all has a sense of *déjà vu: plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose.*

So much has been written on West Asia and on India's foreign policy that in a book appearing in the Nineties you would look for more analysis. Dr. Najma Heptulla quotes the President of the All-India Khilafat Conference as saying that the Turkish-Sultan Caliph 'would have complacently confirmed the doom of his country and religion' and she writes that 'while the Khemalist forces were struggling for national liberation in Turkey, the Indian Muslims went ahead and launched the Khilafat movement'. Did India, motivated to some degree by internal political reasons, go too far? Or, again, did India unwittingly deepen the divide in the Arab world between the comparatively 'progressive' Arab states and the more conservative by siding so fully with the former? Was this to India's detriment in later years? But, in the first place, did India have a choice in the matter at all?

Dr. Najma Heptulla quotes the Indian writer Jansen's tantalising assertion that in 1954 Nuri Said visited Nehru and offered to keep Iraq out of the Baghdad Pact if India would send troops to defend Iraq in the event of a Soviet attack. This can be seen as a proposition of Machiavellian cleverness, which could not be accepted, but was there within it any scope for negotiation? Most readers would dearly love to see a careful analysis of these and like points forty years after independence. That was, perhaps, outside the scope of Dr. Najma Heptulla's present volume, despite the title. Can we see a companion piece to this introductory volume?

But from the book itself one conclusion emerges. While between the 8th and 12th Centuries the Arabs respected India for the qualities of her people and their attainments, as stated by Dr. Heptulla, it would seem that such respect that India has today in the Arab world comes from the policies fashioned by Nehru. The two are not quite the same thing.

Dr. Najma Heptulla has clearly read widely and she has important and wide-ranging contacts in Turkey and the Arab world. I would have liked to see more from Turkish, Arabic and Persian sources. The book is well-referenced, but there are signs of its having been compiled in haste and Dr. Najma Heptulla has not been fortunate in her proofreaders. There are printing mistakes, and, on occasion, even a footnote referenced in the text is missing. Dr. Najma Heptulla, perhaps, could not be expected to look to these details in the midst of a busy public life.

K.P.S. Menon, *(The Hindu).*

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ty and territorial integrity while at the same time recruiting, training, arming and funding secessionists.

TULF president, M. Sivasithamparam who proposed the vote of thanks said for the TULF to give up its Eelam demand, an acceptable alternative should be given. He said no such alternative had been offered so far.

'Amirthalingam had undertaken to place before the Tamil people an alternative if it is offered. But no such alternative had been offered', he said.

Former Speaker T.B. Subasinghe presided.

CORRECTION

In the penultimate paragraph of the review of the book 'MRG: The Man and the Myth' published in the 15 August issue, page 23, with regard to the Meenambakkam airport incident, the organisation behind the blast was TEA (Tamil Eelam Army) and not the LTTE as was erroneously indicated.

Wanted
Flat or Annexe

Retired couple returning Colombo require a flat or annexe on rent in Colpetty, Bambalapitiya or Wellawatte from January 1993. Reply E 55 c/o Tamil Times.

Continued from page 17

necessary. This will no doubt make negotiations more difficult. It introduces practical restrictions.

Q: *If India is interested in working out a solution to the conflict, if the Sri Lanka government is willing to negotiate with the perpetrators of the Anuradhapura massacre, why is India taking a hard position on this?*

A: All evidence points to Prabhakaran giving the order in the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. This is a major crime. If he is involved in this Prabhakaran cannot escape the consequences of his misdeeds.

Q: *But what if there is a settlement of the ethnic crisis; and suppose Prabhakaran becomes Chief Minister by some chance?*

A: There can be no amnesty in this case. Prabhakaran was involved in the killing of a national leader.

Q: *If the primary objective is resolving Sri Lanka's internal conflict situation then there is a need to leave all options open. A hard stand by India never to let Prabhakaran off the hook would be seen as an obstacle by all sides in Sri Lanka. A prolongation of the conflict will see even more suffering and this goes against the original intention.*

A: I think India should be constructive – having made all kinds of negative inputs in this. Policy makers should approach this with an open mind. The revulsion is so great that I can't see any amnesty. But there is a larger interest of helping in a solution to the ethnic conflict.

Q: *In your lecture you called for an end to both the 'Eelam' demand and also the 'Sinhala Only' concept. do you see both these nationalist conceptions on some kind of 'equal' footing or, do you see the Eelam project as a response to an already existing ethno-centric State dominated by Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism?*

A: Absolutely. It is a response to a State dominated by Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism. It was a nationalism earlier but became chauvinism. The State took a wrong direction with 'Sinhala Only'. It refused to provide an equal place for the Tamil minority, it did not provide them a place in the history. Buddhism was put into the Constitution as a preferred religion. But above all, there was the refusal to institute democratic self-administrative opportunities, to devolve power. The Eelam demand arose as a response to these realities and the experience of seeing the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact scuttled and the discrediting of moderate politicians because they couldn't deliver. Progress has now been made on the language question, on citizenship issues, on reducing distrust on the land question, but what remains is the form of government, and the identity of the Tamils.

Q: *You referred to Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism. How should the structure of the State be reshaped? Are you suggesting a secular State as in India?*

A: Constitutionally secularism is better safeguarded in India than here. There is no preferred religion in the Constitution. We are not totally happy with the Indian model. The forces of Hindu communalism are on the rampage and the ruling Congress Party is making unprincipled compromises. You need a change in your Constitution to make it secular. Also you can't have an 'unitary' principle. the 'unitary' principle clearly works against Sri Lanka as much as it works against India – against its democratic development. For different reasons. India is much bigger, more diverse. But in Sri Lanka you have a specific problem – an ethnic divide. You need to redefine it in democratic terms. It is not a 'nationality' question. It is a democratic question. You need not define any nationalities so you don't recognise any right to self-determination. The two sides in the dispute must approach it as a democratic question which means you are talking of the structure of government. So there should be a reasonable negotiation. Eelam is a pipe dream. But the struggles for Eelam cannot be suppressed. If the Sri Lankan Army takes Jaffna the LTTE will melt away into the jungle and carry on. The LTTE will be a major player in any negotiations.

(*The Sunday Island*, **6.9.92**).

$1.6 Million to Help Tamil Refugees Returning from India

Five countries, Australia, Canada France, United States of America and Great Britain have contributed 1.6 million US dollars (approximately Rs. 70 million to a special project initiated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) aimed at providing emergency relief to Tamils returning from India, an authoritative official said on 25 August.

Mr. Hasim Utkan, who is in charge of UNHCR 'operations' in Sri Lanka said Britain was the latest donor. He said the British government had donated 250,000 pounds to provide emergency relief to Sri Lankan Tamils arriving in North East region from India.

The money will be used to provide emergency assistance to returning refugees he said. The UNHCR which began relief operations in the north in late 1987 was monitoring the repatriation of thousands of Sri Lankans who sought asylum in South India.

Mr. Utkan said the financial assistance was received from those countries after the UNHCR on June 29 appealed for urgent funds to help the returning refugees in their resettlement programme.

Dr. Peter Nicholas, another official attached to the Colombo office of the UNHCR placed the number of returnees at 24,000. He said they were those who returned to Sri Lanka beginning January first this year.

He said the UNHCR wanted to improve conditions in reception centres in North East which at present received the returning refugees and provide water and improve sanitary conditions.

He said there were about 32,400 refugees at Madhu and Pesalai camps. Of this number nearly 30,000 are in Madhu.

Authorities point out that there should be a major improvement in basic facilities explaining that a significant proportion of the returnees are women and children.

Meanwhile western governments were also seeking to begin major operations repatriating thousands of Sri Lankans in their countries authoritative sources said. Switzerland was likely to resume repatriating Tamils in batches later this year if the Federal Office for Refugees (FOR) in that country believe conditions in Sri Lanka were good enough for that, sources indicated.

Recently a three member team from FOR was in Colombo to probe the situation and gather information sources said. The team headed by Mr. Marcel J. Zuckschweart had gone back sources added.

Informed sources said both India and Western countries were determined to send back thousands of asylum seekers.

Meanwhile the British government has donated another £250,000 to the ICRC to continue operations in North East Sri Lanka.

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MATRIMONIAL

Jaffna Catholic *seeks bride not exceeding 38, Catholic/Christian preferred for cousin, 44, Colombo educated executive post holder in London, flat owner. M 612 c/o Tamil Times.*

Hindu parents *seek professionally qualified Sri Lankan Hindu bridegroom for pretty daughter, 27, computer diploma holder, now resident Madras. Send full details in first letter with horoscope and telephone number. M 613 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu mother *seeks pretty girl for son, British born chartered accountant, 26, 5'7". Send details, photo. M 614 c/o Tamil Times.*

Hindu parents *seek groom for systems analyst daughter, 27, fair, in good employment in States. Reply with details, horoscope, photo. M 615 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu sister *seeks fair, attractive bride under 25, for her brother, 28, UK resident, can settle in Australia. Well educated, well employed in London. Send details horoscope, preferably photo. M 616 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu parents *seek fair, attractive bride for son, 27, well employed Canadian Govt. officer. Send details, horoscope. M 617 c/o Tamil Times.*

Parents *seek partner for genial, accomplished daughter, 27, Christian, well employed, British citizen. M 618 c/o Tamil Times.*

WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couples on their recent wedding.

Janarthana *son of Mr K. Jeganathan, (former Principal, Colombo Hindu College, Ratmalana) and Mrs. K. Jeganathan, presently of Transkei, South Africa and* **Sumathi***(Meera) daughter of Mr. & Mrs. M. Karunanithi of Eastwood, Sydney, on 11th July '92 at Ryde Civic Hall, Sydney, Australia.*

Mark *son of Mr. & Mrs. R. Hanson of Blackpool and* **Sukaniya** *daughter of Dr. & Mrs. R. Thirunavukarasu, 101 Middle Leaford, Stechford, Birmingham on 22.8.92 at Chateau Imperey Hotel, Droitwich Spar, Worcester, U.K.*

Thanapalan *son of the late Mr. & Mrs. M. Thananayagam and brother of Mr. T. Sivananthan of Watson Hawksley Asia, 56 Dundas Street, Kowloon, Hong Kong and* **Dr. Sushila** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. C. Sivasubramaniam of 4A Lorong Taman Pantai Satu, Bukit Pantai, 59100 Kuala Lumpur, on 26.8.92 at Kalamandapam, Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur.*

Varathan *son of the late Mr. P.V. Nadarajah and Mrs. T. Nadarajah of Alaveddy, Sri Lanka and* **Savithri** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. K. Sitsapesan of Flat 6, Cambria Lodge, 2 Oak Hill Road, London SW15 on 30.8.92 at Dryburgh Hall, Putney Leisure Centre, London SW15.*

Mohan *son of Dr. & Mrs. K. Thiagarajah of 92 Windmill Hill Drive, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, U.K. and* **Janani** *daughter of Dr. & Mrs. T. Poopalarajah of 24 Orchard Way, Shirley, Croydon, Surrey, U.K. on 30.8.92 at the Arnhem Gallery, Fairfield Halls, Croydon, Surrey UK.*

Nirmalan *son of Mr. & Mrs. P. Navaratnam of 'Navamathy', Kachchai Road, Chavakachcheri, Sri Lanka and* **Sivapriya** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. T. Puthirasingam of 52 Roxeth Green Avenue, South Harrow, Middx., U.K. On 6.9.92 at The Nower Hill High School Hall, Pinner, Middx., U.K.*

***uheswaran** *son of Mr. & Mrs. P. Ariyaratnam of 'Easwarams' Alvai South, Sri Lanka and* **Dhamayanthi** *daughter of Mr. S. Vadivetpillai and the late Mrs. V. Vadivetpillai of 'Thiruveraham', 45 Chetty Street, Nallur, Sri Lanka on 6.9.92 at Sri Ganapathy Temple, London SW19.*

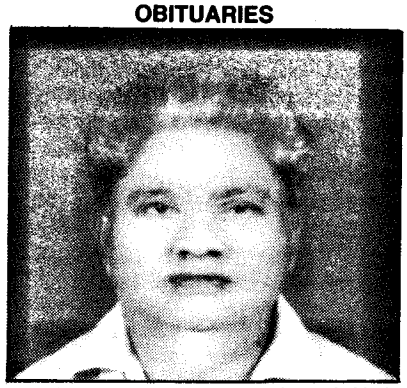
Anpalagan *son of Mr. & Mrs. E. Rajaratnam of Suthumalai North, Manipay, Sri Lanka and* **Sumathy** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. K. Kanthapillai of 9 Walton Gardens, Wembley, Middx., U.K. on 9.9.92 at Greenford Town Hall, London W7.*

Shenthilkumar *son of the late Mr. Ratnam (Editor, Thinapathi, Colombo) and Mrs. Ratnam of 5 Oilman Street, Colombo and* **Loganayagi (Viji)** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Kurunathan of Kokuvil East, Kokuvil, Sri Lanka on 13.9.92 at St. Margaret's Church, Auditorium, 4130 Lawrence Ave. East, Scarborough, Canada – Apt 1210, 1600 Sandhurst Circle, Scarborough, Canada.*

ENGAGEMENT WISHES

Dr. Kesavan *son of Mr. & Mrs. N. Shanmuganathan of Ilford, Essex to* **Girlja** *daughter of Dr. & Mrs. N. Sahathevarajan of Hemsworth, West Yorkshire on 2.9.92 at Registry Office, Ilford and later a reception at the Penthouse Suite, Ilford, Essex on 5.9.92.*

OBITUARIES



Mr. Sivalingam Arthimoorthy *of Vadaliyadaippu, Pandateruppu, formerly of Karampan, Kayts, (Retired Building Inspector), beloved husband of Sivapackiam; loving father of Ariaran (Transprint, Translanka Investments, Sri Lanka), Kirupaharan (U.K.), late Gnanakaran, late Karunakaran; father-in-law of Suhanya Praba (Sri Lanka); loving grand father of Athithiya, Anagayan passed away peacefully on 22nd July 1992. Funeral took place on 26th at Jaffna – 52 Lily Avenue, Colombo 6; Tel: 586858 & 47 Yewfield Road, London NW10 9TD; Tel: 081 459 1714.*

Ramachandra – Mrs Sinnathangam, *beloved wife of late K. Ramachandra of the Railways, Sri Lanka; loving mother of Paramaswary, Dr. Pararajasegaram (Eye Surgeon, Consultant, W.H.O., Geneva), Sundaralingam (former senior D.I.G., Sri Lanka Police, Interpol, Lyons), Bala Superamaniam (Consultant, Ove Arup Partnership, London), late Shanmugalingam, Dhanalakshmi, Bhuvaneswary; mother-in-law of Senathirajah, Ruby, Yaso, Barbara, Gananathalingam (Customs, Sri Lanka), Arunachalam (Legal Draftsman, Sri Lanka) and precious grand mother of many grand children expired on Monday, 10th August 1992. Funeral was held on Saturday, 15th August in Colombo. – 12 The Avenue, Wembley Middx., U.K.*

IN MEMORIAM

In Loving Memory of Our Beloved Dad

T.J. Rajaratnam

(Retired High Court Judge)
Born 23.1.1919

Called to Rest 15.9.1981

Precious memories woven in gold
These are the treasures
We tenderly hold
Today tomorrow and our whole life through
We will always love and remember you

Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by your loving wife, Arul, Children, Rohini, Renuka, Rajiv, sons-in-law, Vijayan, Sriharan, grandchildren, Vasi, Ravi, Prathi, Jayanthy, Ajit.

In loving memory of **Dr. Saravanamuttu Paramanathan** *on the first anniversary of his passing away on 26th September 1991.*

Greatly missed and remembered with love and affection by his wife Vallambihai; his children Lohini, Mohini, Wickneswaran; his sons-in-law Ganesharatnam, Ratnasabapathy (Napo); daughter-in-law Bernada; his grand children Kumarah, Vanathy, Haran, Dhakshila – 30 The Ridgeway, Kenton, Harrow HA3 0LL.

In Loving Memory of

Reggie Hunt

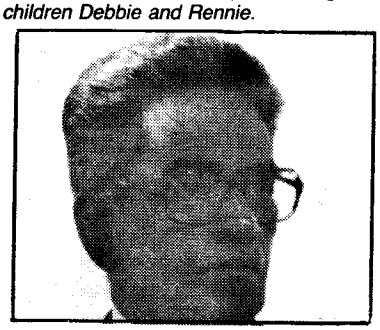
who died on 9th September 1991

We often sit and think of you,
And think of how you died;
To think you could not say goodbye,
Before you closed your eyes.

The blow was hard, the shock severe,
To part with one we loved so dear,
Our loss is great, we'll not complain,
But trust in God to meet again.

Our family chain is broken,
And nothing seems the same,
But as God calls us one by one,
The links shall join again.

Fondly remembered by wife Angie and children Debbie and Rennie.



In loving memory of **Mr. Chelliah Kanthasamy**, *Telecommunication Engineer of Kaddudai, Manipay, who passed away on 11.9.1988.*

You were one with a heart of gold
The value of which can never be told
In your home there remains a vacant space
None in your near circle can fill your place
Death is a heartache no one can heal
But memories are something no one can steal
We do not part from the one we love
No distance can divide
For every day down memory lane
We still walk side by side

Fondly remembered and sadly missed by wife and children – 58 Magowar Road, Girraween, NSW 2145, Australia.

In loving memory of our beloved mum **Srimathy Sivapakiam Rajagopal,** *on the 4th Anniversary of her passing away on 27.9.1988.*

'He who Believeth in Me,
Even if He Dies Shall Live'

Brave and Loyal – the Life and
Practice of Love and Culture in
Tender words of Greatness and
Deed of Courage Facing Life
Bound In Adversity or In
Wealth In Sorrow or In
Happiness, bearing the Burdens
to Share with Patience and Dignity

Four long lonely years since you left us and the light went out of our lives. Time does not assuage our grief, but sweet image is indelibly imprinted in our hearts and we will love you till our last breath.

Fondly remembered and sadly missed by your Loving Children, Grand Children and Great Grand Children.

Mrs. Sivajothy Pillai and Mrs. V. Nanthakumaran – 19 Christchurch Close, Summers Lane, London N12.

Mirudhanga Arangetram

Soruban Sarvananthar *is not just another young glittering star in the horizon of the 'Karnatic Music Sky' in London today. He should undoubtedly be considered a dedicated, energetic and brilliantly cheerful percussionist of the young generation rapidly making headway with 'Arangetrams' in the west.*

Soruban has had a good foundation in the art of playing Mirudhangam from eminent tutors. His early knowledge of Tala disciplines in Vocal and Flute have strengthened his accuracy in Tala rhythmics. His arangetram at Winston Churchill Hall on 22nd August was well received by both musicians and art lovers. He appeared very much at ease with his instrument and remarkably cheerful. He was keenly aware of the compositions marvellously rendered by Sri Kutralam V. Nagarajan and ably accompanied by Srimati Kalaivani Indrakumar on the violin.

Soruban's solo mirudhanga vinikai had resplendent rhythmic complexities and accuracy. He was very ably supported by the Ghatam artiste Sri Bhaskaran Srikaran. Their interludes brought many applauses from the audience.

The success of Soruban's arangetram goes to the Guru Sri Karaikudi Krishnamurthi, who possesses many talents as a mirudhangist, accompanist and a composer. All performing artistes are not good tutors, but Sri Karaikudi Krishnamurthi has an inherent ability to fathom the capacity of his students and guide them to achieve their goal through arduous methodical practices.

Soruban's parents deserve the same encomiums showered on their proud son. They are both talented in music and sacrifice their time and leisure for the sake of their children's progress in more than one way.

Sabash! Soruban. Keep learning and mastering this indomitable 'King of Percussion Instruments'.

Saraswathy Packiarajah.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

October 4 *Saraswathy Pooja.*

Oct. 4 *5.30pm London Tamil Institute presents Carnatic Vocal Concert by Kuttalam. V. Nagarajan at the Winston Churchill Hall, Pinn Way, Ruislip, Middx. Tel: 081-904 3937.*

Oct. 5 *Vijayathasamy.*

Oct. 7 *Ekathasi.*

Oct 9 *Pirathosam.*

Oct. 10 *Puradathi Sani (Last).*

Oct. 11 *Full Moon.*

Oct. 11 *6.00pm Nupra Kendra School of Dance presents* **Vishnuarpanam,** *a Bharatha Natya programme by the students of Subatra Sivadasan at Ashcroft Theatre, Fairfields, Croydon in aid of Sri Maha Vishnu Moorthy Kovil, Dehiwela, Sri Lanka. For tickets Tel: 081-949 7376/942 8225/942 6383.*

Oct. 17 *7.00pm West London Tamil School presents* **'Pannum Parathamum'** *at Acton Town Hall London W3. Tel: 081 566 1082.*

Oct. 22 *Ekathasi.*

Oct. 23 *Pirathosam.*

Oct. 24 *London Veena Group presents Annual Cultural Evening of Song, Music and Dance at Graveney School Hall, Welham Road, Tooting, London SW17. Tel: 081 471 2348.*

Oct. 25 *Amavasai and Deepavali.*

At the Bhavan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel: 071 381 3086/4608.

Oct. 2 *7.45pm Gandhi Jayanti Celebrations with Dance Drama* **'Tirupani'.**

Oct. 3 *7.00pm Veena by Shanti Rao.*

Oct. 23 *7.45pm Kathak by Birju Maharaj Saswati Sen & Troupe from India.*

Oct. 25 *6.30pm Karnatic Vocal by Mrs. Saroja Soundara Rajan.*

Oct. 30 *7.45pm Devotional Songs by Husain Sab Das from India with accompanists.*

Oct. 31 *7.00pm Bharatha Natyam by Kumari Usha Rao from India.*

3rd Anniversary Celebrations

The London Anglo Tamil Association (LATA) celebrated its third anniversary on 30.5.92 at the Salisbury School Hall, Edmonton, London N9. Proceedings commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by Mr. & Mrs. Kantharoopan. The chief guest Clr. Doreen Mandon, Mayor of the London Borough of Enfield and the special guest, Dr. Ian Twinn, M.P. for Edmonton, speaking afterwards complimented the association for the excellent work done by them to keep Tamil Culture and Tamil identity alive and thereby enriching the British multicultural society by their own contribution.

The pupils and staff of the North London Tamil Cultural School entertained the large gathering numbering around 800 with a variety of items viz:- speeches, dances, singing, violin and mirudhangam recitals, drama; which were of a very high standard. The headmaster, Mr. S. Kandasamy presented his report regarding the progress made and future plans. The president Mr. N. Thiruppathy complimented the members on their unity which has helped the association to forge ahead with invaluable services. The Secretary, Mr. S. Sivachandran proposed a vote of thanks.

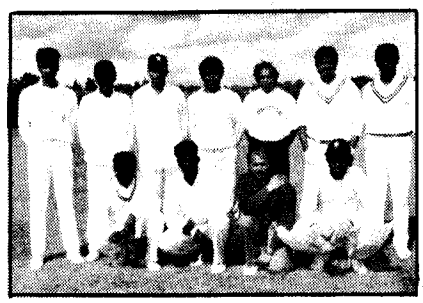
Kalabharath

Kalabharath, a school of dancing organised under the guidance of Smt Rajini Sureshkumar, gave its inaugural performance of several items of Bharatha Natiyam and Kuchipidi at the Acton Town Hall, London W3 on 25th July 1992.

Dr. B. Sivaloganathan, who was the Chief Guest complimented Rajini on the excellent show presented to the very appreciative audience and gave away the prizes.

J.S.S.A. (U.K.) Excels in Maiden Effort

The Jaffna Schools Sports Association (U.K.) organised a very successful inaugural Cricket Festival on August 31st (Bank Holiday, Monday) at John Billam Sports Grounds, Kenton, Middx. Old students of 12 Jaffna schools viz:– Chithambra College, Hartley College, Jaffna College, Jaffna Central College, Jaffna Hindu College, Kokuvil Hindu College, Mahajana College, Manipay Hindu College, Skanda Varodaya College, St. John's College, St. Patrick's College and Union College formed the 12 participating teams and over 2000 spectators had a very enjoyable day's proceedings.



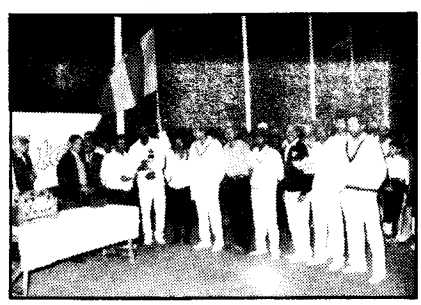
Jaffna Old Centralites Champion Team

The Jaffna Old Centralites emerged as champions overwhelming the Old Patricians in the finals. The tournament was sponsored by Skylink Travel Ltd., and their Marketing Manager, Mr. S. Sivasubramaniam, took a keen interest in promoting the festival. At the end of the tournament he presented the following awards.

Player of the tournament: Ramesh Sabaratnam, Old Patrician.

Best Bowler: J. Arulanandam, Old Patrician.
Best Batsman: K.M. Thomas, Old Jaffna Centralite.

Man of the Match (Final): K.M. Thomas, Old Jaffna Centralite.



The net proceeds of the Festival will go towards providing sports facilities for Jaffna Schools.

Hartley College O.B.A. (U.K.) Fete Pooranampillai

Hartley College Old Boys' Association (UK), organised a complimentary dinner on August 15 at Holiday Inn, Langley, Slough to honour their former principal Mr. K. Pooranampillai. Mr. A.T.S. Ratnasingam, President of the O.B.A. while paying tribute to Mr. Pooranampillai referred to the exemplary services rendered by him as teacher, vice-principal and principal for over 34 years, during which period the college had made vast strides in its service to the community. Others who spoke were Dr. K.H. Sivakumar, Mr. C. Krishnamoorthy, Mr. R. Ravindralingam and Mr. A. Sriharan.

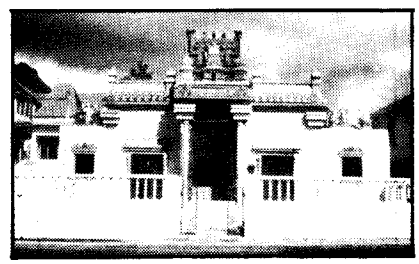
Mr. Pooranampillai while thanking the organisers, referred to the services of his predecessors, Messrs. J.C. Sherwood and C.P. Thamotheram who were responsible for raising the school from the elementary status to a leading college in Jaffna. At the commencement of the dinner a minute's silence was observed in memory of four past principals, who had passed away during the last two years, namely Messrs. R.M. Gunaratnam, P. Ahamparam, W.N.S. Samuel and C. Rajadurai.

At the A.G.M. held before the dinner the following office bearers were elected for 1993. Mr. S. Sooriyakumaran – President, Mr. R. Ravindralingam – Secretary, Mr. C. Krishnamoorthy – Treasurer.

First Hindu Temple in Seychelles

On May 6th, 1992, the consecration ceremony (Kumbabishekam) of the Vinayakar Temple in Quincy Street, Victoria, Mahe, Seychelles; marked the beginning of a new era in the tourist paradise of Seychelles. The foundation stone was laid exactly 2 years earlier on 6.5.90.

The Republic of Seychelles consists of 115 islands, spread over an area of 1.3 million square kilometres. The main island of Mahe lies close to the equator, 4 degrees south of it. The earliest evidence shows that Hindus lived there since 1756.



On 6.5.92 devotees gathered at 5am and the day long Kumbabishekam ceremonies commenced. Five priests came from India to perform the religious ceremonies.

In the evening Buddhists and Christians joined the Hindus and celebrated Easwaramma Day (Children's Day) which is celebrated throughout the world to build bridges between people of different religions.

A cultural show of music and dance brought the day's proceedings to a close.

Reading Tamil School

Tamil parents of Reading, Berkshire who have been concerned about their children's lack of knowledge of Tamil language and culture have established a Tamil School at 213 Basingstoke Road, Reading, Berks. RG2 0SX. Tel: 0734 576683. The school has attracted support from those living in close proximity to the Reading area.

Classes are held on Sundays catering to children of ages 4 to 13. The school is run by a committee of parents on a non profit making basis. It is the intention of the school to increase its curriculum and expand its activities. Members of the Tamil community living in the Hampshire, Oxfordshire and other surrounding areas are kindly requested to support this venture. Please contact Mr. A. Nagendran of the Parents' Committee whose address and Telephone number appear above.

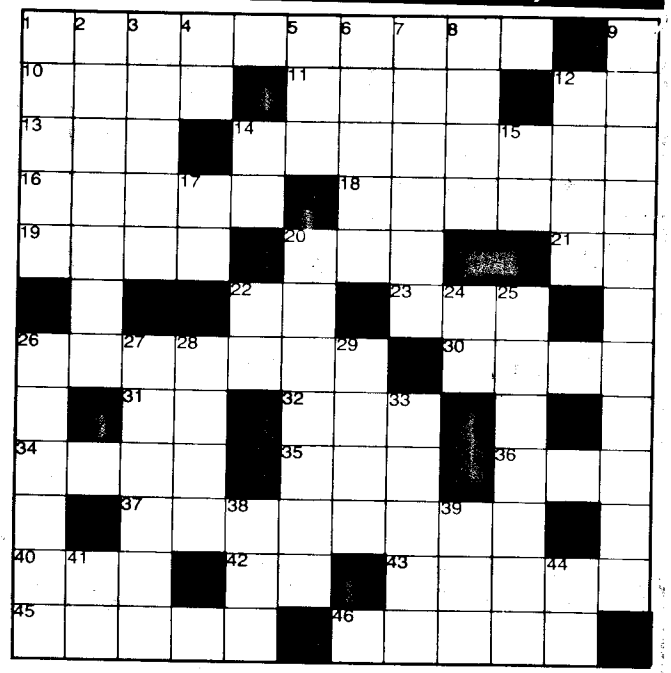
QUIZ CROSSWORDS – No. 20. Compiled by: Richards

Closing date for completed grid and coupon to be received is 31 October 1992.

Answers and the name of the winner – first all correct entry pulled out of a bag – will be announced in the November 1992 issue.

The winner will receive a prize of £10.00 sterling.

All entries should be sent to: Tamil Times, P.O. Box 121, Sutton, Surrey SM1 3TD, UK.



Across.

1. Fabled Hindu celestial musicians (10)
10. Somewhat circular but longer than it is broad (4)
11. Air Force Down Under, abb. (4)
12. Briefly hectare (2)
13. Desired result in a contest (3)
14. Writer or speaker who renders a series of connected events (8)
16. Krishna's favoured maiden (5)
18. Princess of Tyre in Greek mythology wooed by Zeus in the form of a bull and to him bore three sons Minos, Rhadamanthus and Sarpedon (6)
19. It's in full! (2,2)
20. The giant's favourite pet in Jack and the Beanstalk (3)
21. Chemical symbol of Einsteinium (2)
22. Motoring organisation (2)
23. The term Andre-Marie Ampere, a French mathematical child prodigy who became one of the founders of electromagnetism and electrodynamics, has given to everyday electric current usage (3)
26. The cow-herd and prince, an incarnation of Vishnu (7)
30. Ancestor of the human race, saved from the flood by a great fish (4)
31. Small American state also a breed of chicken, abb. (2)
32. — Agency, usually an adjunct to an embassy of a particular western country, abb. (3)
34. Raise a question for discussion (4)
35. Mother, affectionately (3)
36. By way of or through (3)
37. Lord of the Dance, a manifestation of Shiva (8)
40. Mass of eggs in a fish's ovary (3)
42. Printer's measure (2)
43. Sermon or story narrated in verse in Zoroastrianism and Hinduism (5)
45. Vedic King of the gods and Lord of storms, fertility and war (5)
46. Milkmaids, lovers of youthful Krishna (5)

Down:

1. The Golden One, a benign aspect of the great goddess (5)
2. High flyer (7)
3. Lord Shiva's vehicle (5)
4. Decilitre, briefly (2)
5. A constellation in the Southern Hemisphere near Scorpius (3)
6. — show, a street carnival (5)
7. Ancient god of the skies and cosmic order, later god of the waters possibly related to Iranian Ahura Mazda and Greek Uranus (6)
8. A great distance (4)
9. An incarnation of Vishnu who bore the magic battle-axe given by Shiva (11)
12. An encouraging expectation (4)
14. Chemical symbol for sodium (2)
15 – and fro, backwards and forwards (2)
17. Hoc sensu, in this sense, abb. (2)
20. Ramayana's semi-divine lesser hero who led a land force to Sri Lanka to liberate Sita (7)
22. Expression of delight, surprise or pity (2)
24. Millimetres, briefly (2)
25. Daughter of Himalaya and consort of Shiva (7)
26. Indian lass (6)
27. When – out could mean all differences settled (6)
28. Epic heroine of great beauty, will and virtue (4)
29. Supreme national god of the ancient Assyrians (4)
33. Fully developed stage of a butterfly (5)
38. Highland delight from Sri Lanka (3)
39. Far East national (3)
41. Ancient Egyptian god (2)
44. Short Home Secretary (2)

Quiz Crosswords – 18: Solutions.

Across: 1. Ixion. 5. Hesiod. 10. Na. 11. Betoken. 12. Knee. 14. Me. 15. Ace. 17. To. 18. Poe. 20. Snap. 21. Oh. 22. Socrates. 24. Midas. 26. Go. 27. He. 28. Pythagoras. 32. Spa. 33. Na. 34. Echo. 36. Oedipus. 38. Scop. 39. Asp. 40. Ewe. 41. Mirth. 44. Viper. 46. Panchatantra.

Down: 1. Ink. 2. Xanthippe. 3. OBE. 4. NE. 5. Homer. 6. Eke. 7. SE. 8. Inane. 9. Deep. 13. EO. 16. Cash Shower. 18. Posh. 19. OC. 20. Stores. 21. Om. 22. Sat. 23. Ago. 25. Dyad. 29. Anusha. 30. Gasp. 31. Accept. 32. Sow. 35. Opera. 37. Path. 41. Ma. 42. In. 43. RC. 44. Va. 45. In.

Winner: Mr. Bobby Selvadurai, 1700 Finch Avenue East, Apt 1213, Willowdale, Ontario M2J 4X8, Canada.

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UNITY IS STRENGTH

by Richards Karunairajan

If there is no unity among us in the face of adversity, then we have not learnt the lesson a Karainagar landowner taught his five sons.

Visuvar a banana tycoon from the village of Thangodai on the northern island of Karainagar was unhappy that his five sons failed to live up to his expectations. Their respective births, befitting sons as was customary, were announced by banging on the roof and were celebrated by offering poojas to the local deity and pongal to relatives and friends with liberal servings of katkandu (rock sugar).

As the boys grew up in the seat of wealth, and the power it wields amidst Tamil rural communities, there developed among them bitter quarrels over their inheritance. Their father acquired his wealth through his own hard work (thedia thettam) working day and night like his own kinsmen in such distant places as Ruanwella, Panadura, Kochikade, Veyangoda, Nawalapitiya and Pettah, the dowry that his wife brought into the family (seethanam) and inheritance from his parents (mudusam).

The tycoon had no daughters. Any way, a female child is considered a liability. A daughter's own talents and education are never considered as assets when it comes to proposals of marriage; not even her beauty and accomplishments. Even liberal western-style education widely networked throughout Tamil homelands has not made the desired impact on customs that are an insult to human dignity, even when many of these have become counter-productive.

The five brothers were not only concerned about their inheritance but were also on the lookout for brides who would bring them substantial dowries. The father concerned at their behaviour and the disunity that prevailed among them and, aware that his business competitors would certainly exploit such a situation, called each of his sons to his side and asked them one by one to break a bundle of five pieces of firewood.

They tried their best but failed to make any progress. They could not even bend the bundle. He then took the bundle apart and gave one piece of firewood to each of his sons and asked them to break it. This time they found the task easy but in the process understood what their father wished to convey to them.

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